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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

STRUCTURES IN WESTERN CANADIAN FICTION

BY

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

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EDMONTON, ALBERTA

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled Structures in Western Canadian Fiction submitted by Suzanne Toal in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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DATE April 20, 1976

TO MY FATHER

ABSTRACT

Two tendencies among Canadian critics are to level out their fiction under one theme, for example, Margaret Atwood's Survival, or to condemn it because it is either "unrealistic" or intellectual. A book is considered to be "unrealistic" if its characters are types or symbols rather than suggestive of realistic human beings; intellectual, if it postulates some ideology. What I am attempting in this thesis is to outline a scheme for reading fiction which can accommodate intellectual content, symbolic characters and realistic characters, and which suggests that the three can co-exist in a given work. I am taking a structuralist approach based on the works of Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, Gérard Genette and Roman Jakobson, and have chosen a control group of English and French Western Canadian novels (that is, works from the prairie provinces). In choosing this particular group I was influenced by two considerations. The first is that prairie fiction has been consistently attacked because it is "unrealistic" or intellectual; the second is that it is generally discussed with reference to a single theme--the relationship between man and the landscape.

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INTRODUCTION

There is a marked tendency among critics of prairie fiction to concentrate, in their analyses, on the significance of the landscape. Laurence Ricou's Vertical Man/Horizontal World: Man and Landscape in Canadian Prairie Fiction is an extension of Henry Kreisel's article, "The Prairie: A State of Mind". It works out the geometric image, through several authors, of upright man challenged physically and mentally to assert himself by the flat prairie world. While I do not deny the value of such an approach, I feel that it tends to focus attention solely on those works in which the prairie is a dominant theme. As a result, there are several Western Canadian novels which are neglected because the prairie is not a significant part of their structures. Notable examples are the works of Georges Bugnet and Marguerite Primeau. It is possible to take a wider view of the term "prairie". One critic uses it "as a means of organizing a number of western novels in the two official Canadian languages",[1] and thereby, treats a much larger body of works than that contained within the theme of "man in the landscape". I am using the same type of rationale in this thesis by attempting to organize a group of English and French Western Canadian novels under the term "structures". Using a form of analysis developed from the theories of the structure of narrative discourse put forward by Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, Gérard Genette and Roman Jakobson, I have examined the structures of four prairie novels and three short stories. Although thematically dissimilar, two of the works, Dans le Muskeg by Marguerite Primeau and Wild Geese by Martha Ostenso, indicate

marked structural similarities. Gabrielle Roy's Rue Deschambault introduces a significant structural variation, while As For Me and My House by Sinclair Ross seems to be a different type of structure from that of the other three works. Ross's short stories fall between the structure of As For Me and My House and that of Wild Geese and Dans le Muskeg. I selected these examples because I felt that they not only provide a good introduction to the possibilities of structuralism as a critical approach to prairie fiction, but also because they suggest that it is possible to make fruitful comparisons between works which are not linked by either theme or image.

My second objective in approaching prairie fiction from a structuralist point of view is to challenge the type of criticism which condemns a work because it is "unrealistic" or because it has intellectual content. What I have attempted to do is to find a neutral vocabulary which can be brought to the structure of a novel untrammelled by any evaluative presuppositions. Since my purpose is primarily exploratory, I have avoided making value judgments.

The first chapter outlines the critical method which I have used. The second chapter shows the structural similarities between Dans le Muskeg and Wild Geese. Chapter three develops how Rue Deschambault can be compared to, and contrasted with the first two examples, and then uses these findings to examine the structure of As For Me and My House. I then discuss the structures of "The Lamp at Noon", "The Painted Door" and "Not by Rain Alone" with reference to the points raised in the

preceding chapters. In the conclusion, I attempt to organize a larger body of Western Canadian fiction within this critical framework.

CHAPTER I

MASTER OF THE MILL: A STRUCTURAL READING

In The Canadian West in Fiction Edward A. McCourt evaluates a selection of prairie fiction from its late nineteenth century beginnings to the present day. His evaluation is based on the one criterion that if the characters "live", are "flesh and blood creations",[2] are "fashioned in the round from living flesh" (p. 83), are "believable, recognizable human beings" (p. 65), then the book is judged as being successful because it is "realistic"; if the characters are "types", "symbols", "names and little else besides" (p. 64), then the work is judged as having failed. In his analysis of the novels of several authors, McCourt adduces two main reasons for these failures. Characters do not live in a book because the author is "romantic", that is, "unrealistic"; his characters are not true to life, but are idealizations. The second reason is that characters are dwarfed by their background or by the intellectual content of the book. Rudy Wiebe is criticized for his "unfortunate inclination to subordinate the living flesh to the moral or theological or sociological thesis" (p. 81). Frederick P. Grove fails because of his "incomplete understanding of men and women" (p. 58); he views them intellectually and not emotionally. McCourt contends that since Grove's view of man is philosophic, he is compelled, in order to impose his view upon his readers, "to see man not as an individual but as a symbol; and symbols, no matter how ingeniously created, are in the

end lifeless things" (p. 65). In his "Conclusion to a Literary History of Canada", Northrop Frye also complains about the "conceptual emphasis in Canadian culture".[3] He suggests that this "reliance on the arguing intellect" (p. 832) originated in the "garrison mentality" (p. 830) of the settlement communities. Since these small communities were not only isolated from their cultural sources and from each other, but also were confronted by a formidable physical setting, they sought security by building up their own ideological frameworks. These frameworks function as a "sub-literary rhetoric" (p. 831) in the literature of these communities. Language was used "as one would use an axe, formulating arguments with sharp cutting edges that will help to clarify one's view of the landscape" (p. 832). Frye concludes that the literature produced by these physical and psychological fortresses is a rhetorical rather than a poetic achievement:

> . . . the literature it produces, at every stage, tends to be rhetorical, an illustration or allegory of certain social attitudes. These attitudes help to unify the mind of the writer by externalizing his enemy, the enemy being the anti-creative elements in life as he sees life. To approach these elements in a less rhetorical way would produce the theme of self-conflict, a more perilous but ultimately more rewarding theme. The conflict involved is between the poetic impulse to construct and the rhetorical impulse to assert and the victory of the former is the sign of the maturing of the writer. (p. 834)

He goes on to suggest that the imaginative Canadian writer will find his identity in literature itself rather than in upholding a framework of ideas.

That literature should be classed as inferior because its

characters are symbols or because it is conceptual or rhetorical, suggests that a garrison mentality also exists among critics.[4] One work which attempts to break down these critical strongholds is The Nature of Narrative by Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg. They point out that the relationship which exists between an author's fictional world and his real world can be either symbolic or mimetic, illustrative or representational. Whereas representation seeks to reproduce actuality, illustration presents selected aspects of the actual. The frame of reference for representative characters is the whole human being; illustrative characters are "concepts in anthropoid shape or fragments of the human psyche masquerading as whole human beings".[5] They go on to make the important point that a piece of fiction can get its meaning, at the same time, from both the real world and the world of ideas.[6]

In an attempt to find a less arbitrary framework of criticism for Canadian literature than that realism is good and that the conceptual is bad, I have, first of all, attempted to explicate the structure of Grove's The Master of the Mill and then, used this explication to abstract a critical framework which can be applied to the structure of other works. I have concentrated, furthermore, on structure as seen from the point of view of the narrator. I have chosen a book by Grove, because the critical approaches to his works provide a good example of the confusion of critical terms which surrounds, not to say obscures, Canadian fiction. The problem with Grove is that critics tend to confuse his subject matter and the way in which it is presented. The typical approach praises him because he is a "realist" in that he deals with everyday issues--building

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houses, money problems, family quarrels--but condemns him because his characters are unreal.[7] Grove himself objects to these critical standards in his article "Realism in Literature". He argues that realism does not mean "frankness in matters of sex",[8] but is "a matter of literary procedure, not of the choice of subject" (p. 53). Equating the artist with the realist, he goes on to give a definition of realism which aligns it with conceptualized fiction. The artist or realist is not a recorder of facts, one who gives "a surface likeness to reality" (p. 60), but is concerned with the universal rather than the particular; the work of art "mirrors a more or less universal human reaction to what is not I" (p. 63). The type of approach which I am adopting emphasizes "literary procedure" over "the choice of subject". Whether it is a "realistic" topic or not, the important point, in this thesis, will be how it is presented in the work. The first distinction which can be made is the one which I have already quoted from the work of Scholes and Kellogg--a text can be treated either conceptually or representationally. If "realistic" subject matter is presented conceptually, then it is a false judgment to consider the work flawed because the characters are "unreal". They are being used to exemplify aspects of the dominating conceptual subject matter, and, as such, their function in the work is to be part of this concept and not to reflect a whole human being. In order to distinguish between the subject matter of a text and the way it is presented, I will use Gérard Genette's distinction in his "Discours du récit" between the histoire, the récit and the narration of a narrative discourse. The histoire is the story which can be abstracted from the discourse, the récit

is the words actually written down, whilst the narration is the manner in which the récit is presented.[9] According to Genette, the structural analysis of a narrative discourse will work out the relationships which exist between these three levels.[10] The development of Genette's scheme which I am proposing makes use of Scholes and Kellogg's distinction between a conceptual and a representative histoire. Discussion of the récit involves the accepted structuralist notion that the structure of narrative literature builds up along two axes, the vertical or paradigmatic level (the axis of selection) and the horizontal or syntagmatic level (the axis of combination),[11] whilst I have developed a system for examining the relationship between the récit and the narration from Robert M. Jordan's distinction between "multiple unity" and "unified unity". In his book, Chaucer And The Shape Of Creation: The Aesthetic Possibilities of Inorganic Structure, Jordan, acknowledging the work of Scholes and Kellogg, makes a study of Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde and The Canterbury Tales as examples of illustrative or conceptualized fiction. He bases this analysis on the assumption that the structure of a work builds up along both the horizontal and the vertical axes. I found that Jordan's book provided a useful introduction into the type of analyses which I am proposing, and, for that reason, I will show how some of the points which he makes about the structure of Chaucer's works can be fruitfully applied to the structure of Grove's The Master of the Mill. What I will attempt to show is that The Master of the Mill has a conceptual histoire, a récit which favours the vertical or paradigmatic level, and that the relationship between the narration and the récit makes the structure of the work

a "multiple unity" rather than a "unified unity".

Jordan begins by making a comparison between building a house and the structure of a literary work. His thesis is that a useful parallel can be drawn between Chaucer's art and Gothic architecture. He argues that the medieval world view includes the belief that everything which exists is a manifestation of, and therefore can be measured in relation to, a fixed eternal standard. Thus a Gothic cathedral is "a literal realization, structured in stone and glass, of the principles of Creation."[12] It was "conceived and constructed as a visible embodiment of divine order" (p. 47). The Gothic architect had a fixed plan of the Heavenly City in mind, which he then divided into parts and parts of parts. Actual construction of the cathedral was an additive process in which parts would be built up to form wholes, which in turn would be added to other wholes until the predetermined magnitude of the total plan was achieved. Jordan's point is that Chaucer's approach to the structure of Troilus and Criseyde and The Canterbury Tales is analogous to the Gothic architect's approach to the construction of a cathedral. Just as an architect draws up a complete plan for a building before proceeding with the construction, so Jordan shows how, in the Prologue, Chaucer lays out the whole plan of Troilus and Criseyde which is developed in the following five books. This plan is that the story of Troilus and Criseyde (histoire in Genette's terms), illustrates the universal truth of love. Chaucer then approaches the materials of his story like "a builder approaching bricks" (p. xii). The characters are fixed quantities; Troilus stands for faithfulness in love, Criseyde for fickleness or change. The narrator is a type of guide

who divides the story up into different parts, comments on, explains and exclaims about the action of the love story. Jordan calls this "inorganic structure" as opposed to the romantic idea of "organic structure" where a literary work is considered more as a plant than as an edifice. The analysis of an inorganic structure will be in such quantitative and rhetorical terms as amplification, division and embellishment.

Jordan recognizes three structural planes in Troilus and Criseyde. He calls them the vertical structure, the horizontal structure and the cosmic structure. The vertical structure results from the narrator having framed his story at the beginning and from the running commentary he keeps up throughout. The reader, through the narrator, is placed on this vertical plane above the action of the story. The narrator also articulates the sequential or horizontal progress of the story. Since the story was adumbrated as a whole in the Prologue, this horizontal level provides a part by part dilation of the initial generalized reading. To amplify his subject the narrator on occasions even repeats the same part of the story several times. The narrator's point of view oscillates between these two structural levels, the vertical and horizontal, giving the poem what Jordan calls a "compound quality", or the "ability to maintain two separate and dissonant levels of interest in a kind of running counterpoint with one another" (p. 72). These two view points finally converge in the Epilogue and are transcended by the divine perspective. The secular love story is given its place in the cosmos. The cosmic structure is, then, the highest reach of the vertical structure.

A useful parallel can be drawn between the structure of Troilus and Criseyde and The Master of the Mill. An analogy can be made between the actual building of the mill and Grove's narrative method. Just as the pyramidal design of the mill allowed each additional unit to be added so that the original base was unchanged, so the three levels of Gothic construction--vertical, horizontal and cosmic--are easily recognized. The whole plan of The Master of the Mill parallels that of Troilus and Criseyde: it is laid out by the narrator in the first chapter. He frames his story by telling us that the mill is now the master; it has become lord of its creators and has enslaved everybody connected with it. It now has an independent existence" like a fact of nature"[13] and stands as an ambivalent symbol. For many people it was "a monument of the world-order which, by-and-large, was still dominant; of a ruthless capitalism which had once been an exploiter of human labour but had gradually learned, no less ruthlessly, to dispense with that labour, making itself independent, ruling the country by its sheer power of producing wealth" (p. 21). Just as the narrator in the Prologue to Troilus and Criseyde positions himself above the love story, so the narrator in the first chapter of The Master of the Mill elevates the current perspective of the mill, over its past. He then delimits the parts and divisions of the history of the mill along the sequential or horizontal level. He uses a similar technique to that of the Chaucerian narrator; he dilates his subject through repetition and amplification. There are two accounts of the death of Rudyard Clark, one from his son Sam and one from Sam's wife's companion, Odette Charlebois. There is an elaborate build-up

of information from several view points about Sibyl Carter. There is a similar amplification of the respective roles of Sam and his son Edmund. The history is told in separate units with the narrator constantly reminding the reader of the vertical structure of the present perspective. The parts of the history almost always correspond to the chapters in the book, with the narrator generally providing an introduction from the present at the beginning of each chapter. Thus the narrative focus is constantly shifting between the vertical and horizontal planes of action giving what Jordan calls a "compound quality" to the parts of the history of the mill linked together on the sequential level.

The most striking example of this "compound quality" is the handling of characters in the book. The three main male characters, Samuel, Rudyard and Edmund Clark and the three main female characters, the three Mauds, are all fixed quantities like the characters in Troilus and Criseyde. They are all dominated by the mill and they all illustrate some aspect of its growth. Rudyard and Edmund stand for power; Samuel stands for construction. When Edmund reveals to his father how Rudyard got the necessary capital to build the new mill by setting fire to the old mill, he defends his grandfather's action on the grounds that in him he had "felt the power to make nature subservient to his design, to the design of man himself" (p. 225). Edmund goes on to defend his own actions in relation to those of his grandfather:

> "But, like my grandfather, I am a tool of destiny; and I was born to wield power. . . . Let all men be equal in an economic sense, and one incitement to live is gone. Man wants to be able to worship power; and power, to-day, means enormous wealth: wealth that gives him all he needs." (p. 226)

Although Rudyard and Edmund were ostensibly responsible for the growth and success of the mill, Odette Charlebois describes how the mill was "the senator's creation" (p. 73). He was responsible for "the plan whereby the mill could go on growing and growing, so that you never could say, This is old, this is new" (p. 71). Although the three Clarks differ in personality, the narrative commentary tends to analyse them as a unit or in relation to each other. On one occasion the narrator explains how the senator feels his father "coming to life" (p. 102) in him:

> He saw his father before him in various circumstances; saw the way he had behaved on this or that occasion, his flat eyes assuming a faraway look. Only now did he understand; the man's mentality had become his own. (p. 102)

Their interrelationship is a function of the development of the mill, which is paralleled by the horizontal and vertical extensions of the story. Their three characters so fuse into each other that, like the construction of the mill, it becomes difficult to say, "This is old; this is new".

The unity and divisibility of the three Mauds is equally striking. Although they each have quite distinct personalities, in the overall design of the book they combine with each other and with the three male Clarks to form a larger whole. They are, in fact, described by the narrator as "a composite figure" (p. 326). What this composite Maud stands for in the book is perhaps the end of human control over the mill. Edmund's wife is left at the end the sole owner of the mill. She says she is the future. What this means, in actual fact, is that she is totally dispensable. Since Edmund and she decided not to have any

children, the Clark line has ended. One of the last descriptions of the mill states that it has become hermaphroditic; it is able to provide for "its own procreation" (p. 328). It has totally usurped man and is an independent creature--"It had grown as the product of its own logic: it had grown out of the earth" (p. 328). In his article, "The Prairie: A State of Mind", Henry Kreisel discusses how the men who settled the prairies were like giant conquerors whose first attempt to dominate nature was akin to rape. The wheel has come full circle because the mill, which is the ultimate symbol of man's domination over nature, now has become a fact of nature--a huge, uncontrollable, self-propagating growth which totally enslaves mankind. It is possible that the childless Maud who is left as owner of the mill stands for nature's revenge against man's wish to dominate her.

Other minor characters in the book who are also clearly conceptual figures dominated by their function in the construction of the mill are Bob Stevens, Sibyl Carter and Ruth Clark. Bob Stevens, one of the executives of the mill, stands for profit:

> Brief as the life of the mill had been, Bob Stevens represented its tradition; and that tradition had resumed itself in one aim: profit. Profit was his god; not his profit, not anyone's; profit in the abstract. (p. 90)

Odette Charlebois refers to Sibyl Carter, who was instrumental in bringing about the first strike as, "Provocation was the breath of her life" (p. 119). Ruth is described as a rebel. She is the one member of the Clark family who makes an attempt to find an existence which does not depend on the mill. This subordination of personal identity to function

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within a system is also suggested by the party in Arbala house to which all the guests are invited because they stand for something. Maud, Edmund's wife, who was the hostess, reminisces about her escort, the prime minister:

> He, too, like everybody else, represented something. As a person, that is as an intellectual or spiritual entity, he did not exist. (p. 275)

She goes on to describe him in clear iconographic terms:

> He was the Buddha of his world. He sat there, knees crossed, metaphorically, bored and stony. (p. 275)

Just as Jordan compares the structure of Troilus and Criseyde to the construction of a Gothic cathedral, so the structure of The Master of the Mill closely reflects the construction of the mill itself. The base of the mill is the original plan laid out by the narrator in the first chapter. He then builds up the separate blocks of historical narrative on both the vertical and horizontal levels. The aggregate whole is held together and strengthened by the interweaving of the characters.

Other units of construction which are dominated by the framework of the mill are the actual houses in which the characters live. Besides laying out his basic plan in the first chapter, the narrator divides his story up into two parts, both of which are framed by a quotation from Chapman. The first quotation compares the human spirit going through life to a ship at sea. It eulogizes that type of human dynamism which strains itself to the utmost to reach its goal:

> Give me a spirit that on this life's rough sea
> Lives t'have his sails fill'd with a lusty wind

> Even till his sail-yards tremble, his masts crack,
> And his rapt ship run on her side so low
> That she drinks water, and her keel ploughs air.

The second quotation suggests that this human dynamism was as dangerous as playing with dynamite; the explosion of the old order leaves mankind sitting in the rubble of his ideals:

> We must reform and have a new creation
> Of state and government, and on our chaos
> Will I sit brooding up another world.

The mental chaos of the characters in The Master of the Mill is suggested by what Sigfried Giedion in Space, Time and Architecture calls the "architectural disorder"[14] which resulted from the Industrial Revolution. He blames this disorder on the nineteenth century "schism between its thought and feeling" (p. 17) which resulted when the paths of science and the arts diverged. One of the reasons for this schism was that new methods of production encouraged the pursuit of wealth:

> This led on the one hand to the appearance of slums, and on the other to the building of large and formless mansions. Leisure vanished; no one had the time to live gracefully; life lost its equilibrium. The result was a deep spiritual uncertainty--and the more uncertain of himself man became, the more he tried to bolster up belief in the rightness and stability of things through the creation of buildings in the grand, pseudo-monumental manner. (p. 160)

He goes on to give as an example how the architects of Gothic times used new engineering knowledge to express "the aims, emotions and outlook peculiar to their age" (p. 181), but that:

> The situation with regard to those nineteenth-century buildings which were expressly meant to symbolize the spirit of the century is exactly the opposite. Structural iron, for example, was simply a new tool enabling one to

> erect pseudo-monumental exteriors in the old modes. The new tool, of course, by its very employment reduced these "revived" forms to the status of false fronts. (p. 181)

This isolation of architecture from technological advances is clearly in evidence in The Master of the Mill. On the one hand, there are the workmen's cottages of the Terrace which Sam Clark describes "in their agglomeration" as "a horror" (p. 39). On the other hand, there is Clark House which is designed after the great English country estates. Presiding over the whole scene is "that monstrous edifice" (p. 21), the pyramidal shaped mill.

Giedion says that one of the most conspicuous effects of the Industrial Revolution was "the destruction of man's inner quiet and security . . . the individual goes under before the march of production; he is devoured by it" (p. 163). In The Master of the Mill the mill so devours the lives of both rich and poor that their houses are its jails. Bruce Rogers, one of the foremen of the mill, tells Sam Clark how working against the machines is destroying the worker's lives:

> "What he becomes is the slave of a machine which punishes him when he is at fault; the machine seems to watch for the chance. All the time. The men are tempted to yell and to curse at it. And then he is spoiled for anything else. . . . Meanwhile, he gets up and lies down. Between the two things time disappears. It is nothing but a nightmare. It's always time to get up; it's always time to lie down." (p. 193)

The Clark family are equally prisoners of the mill. Most of the movement in the book is between the Langholm and Arbala mills, Clark House and Arbala House. At the end of the book the surviving members of the Clark household confine themselves to a drive out everyday along a specially

built highway which significantly circles back to Clark House.

What Giedion called the "false fronts", the "pseudo-monumental" mansions "in the old modes" put up to hide the insecurity and loss of equilibrium brought about by the Industrial Revolution, is clearly demonstrated in the construction of Arbala House. It is described as:

> . . . a huge limestone structure built in a mixture of neo-Grecian and neo-baroque styles. Its upper storey, apart from a master's suite of five rooms, was laid out like a hotel. (p. 264)

Its owner, Edmund Clark, admits that it is "a show place" (p. 265). He seeks what Giedion calls an "organic" form of shelter for himself in "a little cottage at the north end of the park" (p. 265). His sister Ruth seeks her escape by marrying a European title.

When the first conversion to mechanization of the mill was completed, the narrator comments on how the workers felt:

> All was clear. Flour had been made without the help of human labour though under human control. The work of transportation had been done by gravity; a horizontal alignment had been tilted into a vertical one. (p. 168)

This vertical alignment eventually points to the complete mechanization of the mill and to the cosmic structure of the book. Not only the outer pyramidal shape of the mill but the description of its inside with three hundred feet of empty space hung with machinery suggest that it has become like a space ship. This is particularly evident in the description of the Arbala mill. The building seems to be "surrounded by an interstellar vacancy" (p. 203) and the machines, with their engineers seem to defy gravity:

> There were no elevators, no stairs, no floors. . . . The place was like an enormous well into which all sorts of puzzling machinery had been suspended. Here and there a man with a mop of cotton waste was hanging in mid-air. (p. 202)

When the men who worked at the Langholm mill decided to strike against the management, the narrator says that there was no real reason for the strike: "It was no deliberate move to secure this or that advantage; it was a blind striking out at a menace which seemed to hang from the sky" (p. 262). Again the narrator comments that because of the strike, after which the mill becomes totally mechanized, "the very position of the earth in space is affected" (p. 306). It is eventually suggested as a possibility by Sam Clark that the mill would be capable of becoming a planet:

> The whole scene, by the very contrast with the turmoil outside, made the impression on him as if the mill could go on were the planet to leave its orbit, to be shivered to fragments in some cosmic encounter. He silently laughed at the idea of the mill as a whole revolving around the sun or some other star, like a meteor through a final chaos, scattering flour dust in its interstellar wake; but the laugh was bitter. (p. 319)

If the mill has physically taken on cosmic proportions, its spiritual significance in the total world view of the book has become equally intractable. The mill is clearly seen as a god. The senator at the end of the book sees it as a life-giving god which will liberate mankind from slavery; his son, Edmund, views it as a god which has the power to enslave all mankind, both masters and workers, while, for Odette Charlebois, it grows like doom. As I have already indicated, this parallel which can be drawn between the mill and the state of mind

of its owners can also be made between the characters and the houses or, in the case of the workers, the slums, in which they live. The narrative headings for the two parts of the book, "Death of the Master" and Resurrection of the Master", also point to the cosmic significance of the mill. The term "master" is being applied to both the human spirit and to the machine. The human spirit killed itself by creating the machine; the machine is the god which rose from this death. As the senator suggested, there is the possibility that the machine could make an ascension into space. The final chapter attempts to outline some possibilities for the future of mankind and the mill. There is fear that the process from man to machine will evolve once more, and hope that "the collective human mind" (p. 332) might overcome the machine.

Translated into the scheme which I outlined above, the structure of The Master of the Mill has a conceptual histoire--the machine has become a god, dominating the lives of the people who created it. Its récit favours the paradigmatic level (Jordan's vertical and cosmic structures) over the syntagmatic level (Jordan's horizontal or sequential level). The characters are dominated by the paradigmatic level, and as such, are types or symbols, fixed quantities, parts of a design, rather than individuals. Roman Jakobson calls these two basic tendencies in language structures, the metaphorical and the metonymical poles. The metaphorical pole emphasizes the paradigm, the metonymical pole emphasizes the syntagm. In any given work, there will be "a competition between both devices, metonymic and metaphoric".[15] Just as a syntagm does not necessarily realize the figure of speech, metonymy,

so a paradigm is not necessarily a metaphor. A metaphor will develop along the line of paradigm, a metonym along the line of syntagm. In The Master of the Mill, as they become charged with the significance of their paradigms, the mill and the houses (or slums) in which the characters live, become metaphors for the collective and the individual states of mind. They develop from paradigm into metaphor when they become capable of organizing a network of interconnected paradigms.

In this analysis of The Master of the Mill as an inorganic structure the emphasis has been placed on how the parts of the narrative relate to the framework. This involved the outlining of the structural levels and the recognition that the narrator has double vision because he is responsible for articulating both the sequential or syntagmatic progress of the narrative and the relationship between this horizontal plane and the upward thrust of the framework or the paradigmatic level. Although the characters in the book have individual identities, they function primarily as aspects of the mill. Besides being dominated by the framework of the mill, the rôles of the three main female characters, the three Ruths, are interconnected, as are those of the three main male characters, the three Clarks. There is also an intricate involvement between these six characters viewed as a unit. These configurations of separate narrative strands suggest that there is another aspect to inorganic structure besides that of the relationship between the parts and the framework. This is the relationship of the parts to each other. Eugene Vinaver discusses this problem in a chapter entitled "The Poetry of Interlace" in his book The Rise of Romance. He attempts to explain

the type of unity which exists in an Arthurian cyclic romance by showing how, in these romances, it is possible for several themes to be pursued simultaneously:

> . . . they have no alternate like threads in a woven fabric, one theme interrupting another and again another, and yet all remaining constantly present in the author's and the reader's mind. The adventures which constitute the great cycles of romances thus become part of a carefully thought out design of fantastic dimensions. . .[16]

He goes on to make an analogy between Romanesque ornamental motifs and the narrative devices of thirteenth century romance writers:

> . . . "the formation of sequences" recalls the formation of "threads" in a cyclic narrative, and the complex continuity of curves, spirals and entwined stems corresponds closely to the cyclic interlace. Straightforward progression is abandoned in favour of intertwined patterns, "the themes run parallel, or entwined, or are brought together as in a chequer of knotting and plaiting". (p. 77)

The unity which exists in these designed or interwoven narratives is different from that which exists in a monocentric composition. It involves a "cohesion of themes" (p. 74) rather than a unity of theme. If Jordan's notion of horizontal and vertical structures is the same as the syntagmatic and paradigmatic levels of structuralism, then Vinaver's vocabulary, which describes the relationship between the parts of a narrative in terms of design, also translates easily into structuralist terms. Examples of this are Vinaver's notion of completed designs within a narrative, which become the structuralist idea of "self-regulation",[17] while the designs within a narrative are its paradigms.[18]

The second part of Jordan's book, Chaucer And The Shape of Creation, raises an extreme example of the unity of a designed narrative.

In order to explain how the stories in The Canterbury Tales are self-contained units held within the framework of pilgrimage, he distinguishes between "multiple unity" and "unified unity" (pp. 130-131). He defines "multiple unity" as the concept which organizes an aggregate of individual unities within a controlling outline. In the case of The Canterbury Tales, each of the tales is complete in itself and can stand as an independent unit, while at the same time, it contributes to the total structure provided by the narrative commentary. Their presence within this total structure is justified by thematic relevance. The independently fashioned elements of a "multiple unity" are linked to each other through the principles of juxtaposition and accommodation. The total viewpoint is multi-dimensional because of the fresh significance given to one focal point by the introduction and addition of another. In contrast a "unified unity" tends towards the continuous development of one part into an organic whole dominated by a single point of view. The relationship between its parts is that of subordination and integration rather than juxtaposition and collocation. Whereas a "multiple unity" calls for accommodation among its parts, a "unified unity" is a fusion of parts. The critical vocabulary which will explicate a "unified unity" will include such terms as dramatic propriety, consistency, continuity, inner inevitability; whilst that most suited to the explication of a "multiple unity" will include the concepts of design, balance, patterning, intricacy.

The structure of The Master of the Mill is an example of a "multiple unity". Its récit emphasizes the paradigmatic level. The

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narrator frames the *récit* with the commentary which he abstracts from the syntagmatic level, giving it what Jordan called "double vision" or a "compound quality". The parts of the syntagmatic level which develop several view points about the significance of the mill, are accommodated within this narrative framework. These parts of a narrative discourse, which are combined along the syntagmatic level and are dominated by the paradigmatic framework, I will call "narrative blocks". In contrast, the *récit* of a "unified unity" will favour the syntagmatic level over the paradigmatic as it will tend to absorb its paradigms into the sequential progress of the narrative. The *histoire* in a "unified unity" will generally be a representative one, made up of the people, places and events of the real world, rather than the ideas of the conceptual world. Jakobson makes an interesting connection between realism and the syntagmatic or metonymic. Discussing the relationship between the metonymic and the metaphoric in verbal art, he shows how:

> In poetry there are various motives which determine the choice between these alternants. The primacy of the metaphoric process in the literary schools of romanticism and symbolism has been repeatedly acknowledged, but it is still insufficiently realized that it is the predominance of metonymy which underlies and actually predetermines the so-called "realistic" trend, which belongs to an intermediary stage between the decline of romanticism and the rise of symbolism and is opposed to both. Following the path of contiguous relationships, the realist author metonymically digresses from the plot to the atmosphere and from the characters to the setting in space and time. (pp. 255-256)

It could be inferred from the remarks which I have made above about multiple and unified *narration* that when the *récit* of a structure favours the paradigmatic level it will be a "multiple unity" and when it

favours the syntagmatic level it will be a "unified unity".[19] Although I would suggest that this will be the case in most structures, the works of Sinclair Ross, which I discuss in chapter three, provide examples of how a structure can be a "unified unity" from the narrator's point of view, but a "multiple unity" from the reader's view point, and of how a structure whose *récit* favours the syntagmatic level can have multiple *narration*.

What I am attempting in this thesis is to apply the structuralist approach which I have developed in this chapter to a control group of four Western Canadian novels and three short stories. Two of the works are in French, the other two novels and the short stories are in English. In each case, I will distinguish between a conceptual and a representative *histoire*, a paradigmatic and a syntagmatic *récit*, and multiple or unified *narration*. As already indicated, I will apply the term "narrative blocks" to any identifiable units within a structure, and will use the notion of "frameworks" to refer to the building up of paradigms. I will call the designs within a structure "the interweaving of paradigms". In the second chapter I have concentrated on the structures of Marguerite Primeau's *Dans le Muskeg* and Martha Ostenso's *Wild Geese*. The structures of both these texts resemble that of *The Master of the Mill* in that they have a conceptual *histoire*, a paradigmatic *récit* and multiple *narration*. In the third chapter, I have examined two texts whose structures have a representative *histoire*. The first example, *Rue Deschambault* by Gabrielle Roy, resembles the novels discussed in the second chapter insofar as its *récit* favours the paradigmatic level and its *narration* is multiple.

The second example, Sinclair Ross's As For Me and My House, differs in that it has unified narration and a syntagmatic récit. I have then, used the points raised in these two chapters to show how three of Ross's short stories, "The Lamp at Noon", "Not by Rain Alone" and "The Painted Door" are examples of structures which have a conceptual histoire, a syntagmatic récit and multiple narration. As a conclusion, I have tried to organize a larger body of Western Canadian fiction within this structuralist critical framework.

CHAPTER II

CONCEPT, PARADIGM AND MULTIPLE UNITY

Dans le Muskeg by Marguerite Primeau and Wild Geese by Martha Ostenso are two examples of Western Canadian fiction whose structures approximate that of The Master of the Mill. They both have a conceptual histoire which embraces a cosmic significance, a paradigmatic récit and multiple narration.

In Dans le Muskeg, the histoire involves finding the mean between material progress and spiritual values in the growth of Avenir, a small, Northern Alberta settlement, into a prosperous town. The period of growth extends from the end of the First World War to the end of the Second World War. The récit develops in a series of interlaced narrative blocks which show the varying fortunes over the years of several individuals and families in Avenir. The three main narrative blocks concentrate on the French school teacher, Lormier, the Boston-Irish businessman, O'Malley, and the Catholic parish priest, le Père LeTournec. Through a build-up of commentary provided by the reflections of individual characters, by conversations within the three narrative blocks, as well as by direct statements from the narrator herself, these three main narrative blocks have a "double vision" or "compound quality" which delineates not only the narrative process or syntagmatic level, but also the vertical axis or paradigmatic level. Since the narration accommodates several view points, it is multiple rather than unified. One of the main ideas which

develops along the paradigmatic level is what direction the citizens of Avenir should take in moving into the future. The narrative block which concentrates on Lormier and that which concentrates on O'Malley provide two contrasting attitudes to progress and to Avenir's future.

Lormier is the first schoolmaster in the first school in Avenir. He is a French Canadian from Quebec. The parting words of his old teacher ring in his ears and puzzle him as he makes the long drawn out journey from Edmonton to Blueberry Lake:

> "Donnez ce que vous avez de meilleur", avait dit l'abbé Jacquelin. Puis, d'une voix grave et pénétrante, il avait ajouté: "Joseph, soyez prêt aussi à accepter ce que ce pays neuf peut avoir à vous offrir".[1]

After arriving in Avenir and making some acquaintance with its climate, geography and inhabitants, he dreams of its future; it would be a village, then a little town and, at last, a big city. There would be many prosperous farms around it and French would be spoken in the whole area:

> "Seulement français," se dit-il. "Avenir se trouvait trop loin, trop isolé. L'Anglo-Saxon n'était pas colon; il ne viendrait pas." Lormier s'en félicita. (p. 33)

Lormier dedicates his life to his ideal of a prosperous all-French Avenir, but he never accepts what Avenir has to give him. It offers him a happy personal life in marrying Antoinette, a Métisse, but he decides against it because of Mme. Ducharme's scandal mongering; his marriage to Lucienne is mutually unsatisfactory and he never gets over his love for Antoinette. He becomes the most influential figure in Avenir, reigning as a type of king. When he moves into his new house, he is described, in fact, as feeling "heureux comme un roi" (p. 73). His symbol of office

is that he is educated. His throne room, in a sense, is the school. There is imagery to suggest that Antoinette should be his queen. She is a fair-haired Métisse. When he tries to forget about her, the golden Autumn countryside keeps reminding him of her:

> Sa chevelure avait la couleur de la moisson, son regard était sauvage et mystérieux comme ce pays du Nord. Comme les blés, elle avait poussé vite et mûri sous le soleil ardent. (p. 69)

When they are watching the fish in the Muskeg River, she is crowned by the last rays of the sun, "auréolée de lumière" (p. 81).

In his reign over Avenir, Lormier is elected head of the "Syndicat d'Initiative d'Avenir", which was formed so that the people could choose who would be allowed to settle there. Later on, he is elected Mayor. His policy that only French families should be allowed to live in Avenir becomes the main issue in the election for the Provincial Legislative Assembly in June, 1926. There are two candidates from Avenir--Hébert, who is supported by Lormier and the original settlers of the district, and Leblanc, who is supported by the new arrivals and whose policy is "d'ouvrir toutes grandes les portes d'Avenir" (p. 100). In a close contest, the Métis population swing the vote for Hébert. One influential citizen who did not support Hébert is Tom Lalonde. He objects to the Lormier policy on the grounds that it will suffocate Avenir and jeopardize its growth:

> "Je ne prêterai jamais mon nom à Hébert ou aux autres qui veulent étouffer Avenir. On ne bâtit pas un pays en le cernant de murailles, Monsieur Lormier, et on ne fait pas aimer une langue en l'isolant." (p. 101)

Avenir is divided again into two opposing factions over the issue of the English-speaking doctor. The school committee refuses to rent him land, as it had promised, and he leaves. Not only Tom Lalonde, but also le Père LeTournec support Dr. Richards. Poulin argues for Lormier but, deep down, he has no objections to the English doctor. He supports Lormier, "parce que Lormier, l'homme le plus instruit d'Avenir, devait connaître les besoins du village" (p. 142). The issue becomes so heated that it ends up in a fist fight between the hotel proprietor, Lafleur, and Poulin. It smoulders for a while after le Père LeTournec preaches a sermon on tolerance and charity, but soon flares up again, together with the election issue. Some of the people say that Lormier's closed policies prevent them from prospering like Blueberry Lake and Prosperity Corner: "La langue et puis la 'race', c'est bien beau, mais c'est pas ça qui va nous remplir le ventre" (p. 144). The narrator's tongue-in-cheek comment pokes fun at how money concerns transcend idealism--"Comme tout bon Canadien, les Avenirois aimaient l'argent, par suite beaucoup d'entre eux voyaient prospérer les villages cosmopolites de Blueberry Lake et de Prosperity Corner d'un assez mauvais oeil" (p. 144). It is not a question of money for Tom Lalonde; what he objects to is the fostering of a garrison mentality in Avenir: "On tue ce qu'on emprisonne" (p. 145). Lormier's wife, Lucienne, also argues against keeping Avenir exclusively for French Canadians:

> . . . ce n'est pas ainsi qu'on défend sa "race" et sa langue. Tu veux élever des murs autour d'Avenir pour le garder pur de tout alliage, mais tu oublies que c'est la fusion des métaux qui fait leur force. (p. 137)

In coming to Avenir, Lormier had a chance to prepare the future to face some of the problems of the future; instead, what he brought was a vision of the past. Every year since the school opened, Avenir had a special holiday to celebrate the feast-day of the patron saint of French Canadians, St. Jean Baptist. The motive behind the celebration was, according to Lormier, not only to encourage a love for their fatherland among the young, but also "pour rappeler à chacun qu'il était fils d'ancêtres français qui avaient refusé de se laisser engloutir par la marée anglaise" (p. 125).

Lormier's influence over Avenir starts to decline with the depression of the '30s. The walls begin to crumble through economic necessity which brings people north from the hard-hit prairies. While Ducharme and Tom Lalonde go bankrupt, other people sell out quickly and go to look for work on the Pacific coast. Tom Lalonde's shop is bought by a Boston-Irishman, Patrick O'Malley. O'Malley soon supersedes Lormier and reigns as the second king of Avenir. If Lormier's symbol of office was learning, O'Malley's is money. Lafleur heralds the beginning of the new reign with jubilation:

> Du sang nouveau, du sang rouge de businessman, voilà ce dont Avenir avait besoin. O'Malley avec son gros visage jovial, resplendissant de santé et de prospérité, saurait guérir le village. C'était tonifiant de le voir dégringoler les marches de l'hôtel, sans chapeau, ses cheveux roux au vent, sûr de lui. Quelle différence avec Lormier, ce "rongeur de livres" et son air de vieux journal! Son règne etait bien fini; le roi était mort. Vive le Roi! (pp. 155-156)

O'Malley sets out quite deliberately to dethrone Lormier:

> Il avait hâte, d'ailleurs, de se mésurer avec celui qui régnait depuis si longtemps sur l'esprit des Avenirois.

> Durant les quelques semaines qui venaient de s'écouler, l'Irlandais avait pu constater combien forte était cette emprise. A l'exception de Lafleur, de Roy, et de quelques autres qui détestaient Lormier par jalousie autant que par principe, tous l'acceptaient comme chef incontesté d'Avenir. (p. 160)

The first step in his campaign to win the people away from Lormier is to make a direct appeal to their pockets--he announces a big Spring Sale. For the people of Avenir, it was almost as big a day as the feast day of St. Jean Baptiste--"pour tous, c'était jour de fête" (p. 156). O'Malley is gratified to find that "l'être humain est le même partout et que l'amour de la patrie lui-même s'incline devant l'argent" (p. 161). O'Malley gradually takes over completely from Lormier. The town prospers under him and he is elected Mayor and President of the School Commission. His first triumph is his decision that his son, Tommy, should be taught French. O'Malley's attitude is that it will do him no harm and may be useful to him in the future. O'Malley is clever in his dealings with the people of Avenir because, in his own field, unlike Lormier, he knows how to give as well as to accept what this new countryside offers him--dollars. He lets the farmers have credit and accepts barter as payment; he starts a cheese-dairy, encouraging the farmers to bring their milk and buy half of the shares while he holds on to the other half. The town grows in all directions; it gets electricity and there is a bridge built over the Muskeg River. O'Malley offers long term credit to the families who will go and live on the other bank of the river. He is a leading figure in the Church--not sparing either his time or his money. When things threaten to go against him, for example, when Lormier wants to

start a Credit Union, he puts a word in the ear of his debtors and the project slumps for lack of financial support. He is well summed up in one comment made by the narrator: "c'est que sa tolérance touchait de près ses affaires" (p. 179). He uses his influence to open the doors of Avenir to anybody who wants to come there. The war helps him in this, with sons of Avenir joining up and returning soldiers looking for somewhere to settle. It encourages the total crumbling of the walls around Avenir. O'Malley's crowning blow to Lormier is when he convinces the School Commission that they need a young, progressive principal for their new school. Ironically, he wins the people over to his way of thinking by telling them how well-qualified and educated this young man is. It was education that first won Lormier his respect in Avenir. O'Malley's idea of the future for his children does not lie in Avenir. When Tommy decides to join the local lawyer's practice, he voices his objections strongly:

> No, me boy! Je ne t'ai pas envoyé à l'université pendant cinq ans pour que tu viennes t'enterrer ici parmi les paperasses de ce fin matois de Gaudet. C'est à Edmonton, avec MacMahon, Jordie et Tomlinson, that ye shall be. C'est là qu'est le succès pour un jeune homme, dans une ville où se brassent toutes sortes d'affaires, pas au bord des muskegs. (p. 188)

Lormier's reaction to Lucette's decision to live in Avenir is the complete opposite. What makes O'Malley succeed and Lormier fail is perhaps summed up by a statement made twice in the book. When Lucienne is dying, she talks to Lucette about Lormier's attitude to life, "'parce qu'il ne savait pas transiger avec la vie, parce qu'il la repoussait, celle-ci se vengeait'" (p. 190). When O'Malley is sitting at home gloating over his successes, he says to himself, "'Voilà ce que c'était que d'avoir

se transiger avec la vie'" (r. 183). Unlike that of Lormier, O'Malley's reign in Avenir does not come to an end. Shortly after the fire in the Church, he is making plans for financing the building of a new, fireproof Church, bigger and better than any one around. During the wedding of Tommy and Lucette, he decides to increase his personal donation to the new Church, the extra money being for a new bell to be called after the first daughter of Lucette and Tommy. In true opportunist fashion, his parting thought in the book is that the marriage between an Irishman and a French Canadian girl promises to turn out very well.

The immediate problem caused by these two opposing concepts of progress is the bitter rejection of Bethelormier and O'Malley to their children getting married. Not only do Lormier and O'Malley hate each other on a personal level, but also on the idealistic level. It is totally against Lormier's principles that his daughter should marry an Irishman. O'Malley sees not have any objections on the idealistic level, because, for him, this is non-existent. His objection is on the opportunist level--that Tommy is throwing himself away both by settling down in Avenir, and by marrying a penniless nurse. The solution to this problem is found through the influence of le Père LeTourneux, the third main narrative thread in the book, and through an act of God--the Church burns to the ground.

Le Père LeTourneux is not French Canadian but European French. His origin and past are precious to him, but, unlike Lormier, he does not live in them. He is in a sense an ecclesiastical version of O'Malley without selfish motives. He sees himself after fifty years as a

missionary in Canada as more Canadian than French because "il avait fait sienne cette terre avec ses divergences de nationalité et de culture" (pp. 197-198). He becomes a life-long friend of the United Church minister, the Rev. Charles Albright. He is able to beat O'Malley at his own game: when the latter has threatened to have Lormier's teaching certificate revoked because he is allegedly anti-British, le Père LeTournec makes it quite clear that he, too, can pull strings. He keeps a tight rein over his parishoners. For example, he objects to Popol selling moonshine to the Indians; he becomes especially annoyed when the people of Avenir are divided over the issue of the doctor, and does his best to make possible the marriage of Tommy and Lucette. His rôle in the book is to provide a mean between the two extremes of O'Malley and Lormier--"l'argent" and "l'étroit nationalisme" (p. 184). In his sermon after the fight between Poulin and Lafleur over the Dr. Richards' issue, he says that everybody is talking about patriotism, but who will deny that they are all children of the same father, and therefore, brothers. He sets the date for Tommy and Lucette's marriage, assuring them that their fathers would be there on the wedding day: "Le Nord est au-dessus de ces préjugés, et la petite ville d'Avenir va montrer aux autres ce que c'est que d'être réellement canadien" (p. 209). He is helped in this rôle of pulling the people of Avenir together into a workable unity by the fact that the Church burns to the ground the night before the proposed, but still very much opposed, wedding. The fire in the Church is, in a way, the answer to le Père LeTournec's prayers. He was beginning to get discouraged over Lormier and O'Malley's continued opposition to

the marriage, "Il avait beau se répéter que Dieu ne pouvait faire indéfiniment la sourde oreille, il en vint malgré tout à craindre que, à moins d'une intervention directe du ciel, la rupture qu'il avait crue passagère ne devienne définitive" (p. 204). The "intervention directe du ciel" is the fire in the Church.

If the cosmic structure of The Master of the Mill suggests the frightening prospect of the machine becoming God, in Dans le Muskeg, the cosmic structure, far from being frightening, ties together the serious issues raised in the book with a humorous, even comic, twist. The deus ex machina brings the community of Avenir together in a united effort to save the Church, and reconciles both O'Malley and Lormier to their children's wedding. The question of how people of different nationalities and ideologies can live together in some form of workable unity without losing their individual cultures is interlaced throughout the book with this paradigm of humour. O'Malley's son, Tommy, once reigned for a day as St. Jean Baptiste, the patron saint of French Canadians, while the Rev. Albright, Minister of the Avenir United Church, rescues the statue of St. Joseph from the burning Catholic Church. When it becomes too heavy for him to carry any further, he leaves it in a snowbank. The closing statement in the book, a plea for Christian tolerance among nations, is made by the statue of St. Joseph from the snowbank:[2]

> Oublié sur son piédestal de neige, saint Joseph méditait devant sa petite ville d'Avenir. Il savait mieux que personne que les nations ne sont qu'une devant l'Enfant Jésus et que Celui-ci avait dit un jour: "Il ya des demeures nombreuses dans la maison de Mon Père". (p. 219)

The final appeal, in Dans le Muskeg, is to a sense of humour as the saviour of the world. Besides this paradigm of comedy, the narrative is also interwoven with a paradigm of tragedy in the personal family lives of the Ducharmes and the Lormiers. There is also the suggestion that something has been lost in the growth of Avenir from a tiny settlement into a prosperous town--a paradigm of pastoralism running in contrast to the celebration of progress in the narrative. One such loss is the easy-going, no-rush-to-get-anywhere life-style, combined with the type of social life described during Lormier's first Christmas in Avenir--a constant round of social gatherings where all the community come together in each other's houses. What is perhaps most pathetic is the loss of such old characters as Ducharme with his stories and Popol with his moonshine. This sense of loss is also apparent in the way Avenir has become divorced from the Muskeg. When Lormier arrives in Avenir, the settlers are having a hard time clearing the muskeg; they have to knock down the trees and dig out great roots. The muskeg, at this stage, seems indifferent to man's inroads:

> Le muskeg pouvait étaler la sombre opulence de ses pins à l'horizon; son tapis de mousse pouvait paraître ignorer le pas de l'homme. N'importe! le temps de la forêt était révolu. Petit à petit, la hache du défricheur faisait sa trouée. Le soleil pénétrait plus avant; le sol séchait. (p. 33)

The first school house is a part of the muskeg, yet holds its own against the trees:

> Hommes, femmes et enfants étaient debout devant l'école. Basse, accroupie comme une poule sur sa couvée, elle semblait faire fi de toute la force de ses rondins bruts du Petit Muskeg qui la menaçait sur trois côtés. (p. 37)

When Frank L'Hirondelle returns to Avenir after an absence of fourteen years, he is struck by the fact that the muskeg has now shrunk away on the horizon:

> Les champs remplaçaient les pins, et devant les maisons qu'on reconnaissait avoir été bâties hâtivement, stationnait une voiture-automobile. On pouvait encore apercevoir le muskeg à l'horizon, mais il se tenait éloigné comme s'il avait peur qu'on empiétât de nouveau sur son terrain. Même la Muskeg avait perdu son accent en même temps timide et sauvage d'autrefois: un barrage l'avait civilisée, et voilà qu'elle coulait d'un air blasé entre ses rives dépouillées. (p. 175)

The wedding of Tommy and Lucette combines the two paradigms of pastoralism and progress. It takes place in a primitive setting--the electricity has been cut off because of the fire in the Church and the ceremony is conducted by candlelight. This is a reworking of the first Christmas concert in the old school in Avenir, lighted by the candles of the first Christmas tree. The people of Avenir have come together again, just as they were at the first school concert. This time they are not all French Canadians, but have come together at the marriage of different nationalities.

If the histoire of The Master of the Mill suggests that progress in the form of the machine has taken over people's lives, that of Dans le Muskeg attempts to balance the losses and gains of progress and to find accommodation for human concerns within the impersonality of modern life. The paradigmatic level of the récit is an expansion of this concept. The function of the main characters, Lormier, O'Malley and le Père LeTournec, is to illustrate different aspects of the paradigmatic level. The narration is multiple with the various view points put forward

in the novel controlled by the third person narrator. Like Dans le Muskeg, the histoire of Martha Ostenso's Wild Geese is also conceptual. The ideas which are developed along the paradigmatic axis, are that people should cling together and try to find harmony with nature in the face of universal loneliness. The characters are subordinate to this idea framework and the different view points presented in the novel are contained within the sequence of commentary which accompanies the flight of the wild geese.[3] The syntagmatic level of the récit explores two sets of relationships--those which exist between man and the land, and those which develop between individuals and within families.

The flight of the wild geese is used as a means of gaining distance from all human concerns by providing a universal focus from which to view the narrative. This universal focus is articulated through the commentary of the narrator. It takes the form of two interconnected frameworks. The first delineates the two extremes in human relationships --loneliness and companionship--and suggests that there is an endless human search for fulfilment in the face of this loneliness:

> Far overhead sounded a voluminous prolonged cry, like a great trumpet call. Wild geese flying still farther north, to a region beyond human warmth . . . beyond even human isolation. . . .[4]

and again:

> High above the soughing of the wind under the great eaves of the stone house, Lind heard the trailing clangour of the wild geese. Their cry smote upon the heart like the loneliness of the universe . . . a magnificent seeking through solitude--an endless quest. (p. 47)

The second framework outlined by the flight of the wild geese is the natural growth cycle; they fly North in the Spring, South in the Winter, marking "the beginning and the end of the period of growth" (p. 239). These two frameworks become interwoven when human relationships are compared and contrasted within this growth cycle.[5]

Within the first framework--that of human isolation, human warmth and the eternal quest for fulfillment--the Gare family illustrates an extreme of isolation:

> The Teacher was lonely, and even more conscious of the stark loneliness of Amelia, of Judith, of Ellen and Martin, each within himself. Work did not destroy the loneliness; work was only a fog in which they moved so that they might not see the loneliness of each other. (p. 33)

The main reason for this loneliness is the tyrannical control which Caleb Gare has over his wife and family. They are overworked, kept like prisoners on the farm, treated like animals. There is only functional communication between the members of the family, and even the mother, Amelia, has no emotional ties with her children. The Bjarnassons provide a contrast to the Gare family as they strive towards human warmth. They are a close knit family unit, with several generations living together in their huge house. This is clearly shown by the juxtaposition of two family gatherings--the first in the Gare's house, the second in the Bjarnassons'--both of which were attended by Lind Archer, the school-teacher. Before dinner on Sunday it is the custom for the Gare family to assemble to hear Caleb recite the sermon which he had heard that morning in Church. On this particular occasion, the gist of the sermon

is that people need each other in order to survive: "So must we, who dwell in this lonely land and strive to live Christian lives on the acres the Lord hath given us, cling together for warmth and for good reward for our labour" (p. 42). As the children wait "for the end of the ordeal" (p. 42), Amelia is incensed by, but powerless against her husband's hypocrisy:

> She could have shouted aloud, beaten his face for his hypocrisy. She could have risen and belaboured him with all her strength for his bland misappropriation of a noble passage from the book that had given her many an hour's comfort. But she did nothing but sit and listen attentively until he had, in a hushed voice, given the last blessing. (p. 42)

In total contrast, the following narrative block is a description of Lind's visit to the Bjarnassons'. She is struck by their warmth and hospitality and by the respect that they have for each other. After a lavish supper, Lind hears about a quarrel between two members of the family during which they had both drowned in the lake. The Bjarnassons' will not let anybody fish in the lake until the bodies have been recovered. Mathias goes on to explain some of the Icelandic family customs to Lind and tells about the "dire fate" which befell "one who was disloyal to that pride, to that great bond" (p. 47). Lind goes on to assess Mathias in terms of loneliness and family life:

> He had lived much in communion with solitude, and had come to know that there is an unmeasurable Alone surrounding each soul, and that nameless and undreamed are the forms that drift within that region. So that it was well for the members of a great family to cleave together and so ward off the menaces and the dreads of the great Alone. (p. 47)

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The dread of "the great Alone" and the necessity "to cleave together" are paradigms which become interwoven in the relationship between Mark Jordan and Lind Archer. They illustrate an attempt to find human warmth in the face of ever present loneliness. When Lind, seeking shelter in the Klovaczs' house, meets Mark for the first time, the narrator comments on how they both become aware of "the fear of loneliness" (p. 64):

> . . . the ancient dread of abandonment in the wilderness in the profounder natures of these two who found shelter here. For an imponderable moment they sought beyond each other's eyes, sought for understanding, for communion under the vast terrestrial influence that bound them, an inevitable part and form of the earth, inseparable one from the other. The moment was like a warm handclasp. (p. 64)

At the end, when Lind and Mark are leaving Oeland for ever, Lind analyses her relationship with Mark in terms of loneliness and the flight of the wild geese:

> Lind felt humble as she heard the wild geese go over. There was an infinite cold passion in their flight, like the passion of the universe, a proud mystery never to be solved. She knew in her heart that Mark Jordan was like them--that he stood inevitably alone. But because of the human need in him, he had come to her. It warmed her to dwell on the thought. (p. 239)

The second framework provided by the flight of the wild geese--the natural growth cycle--encompasses two different aspects of the prairie--cultivated growth and wild growth. Caleb stands for the cultivated prairie, and all that implies. He is the most successful farmer in the neighbourhood whose ultimate triumph is growing a magnificent field of flax in difficult circumstances. In contrast to this tamed

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prairie, there is a sequence of descriptions of a wild, uncultivated prairie running throughout the book. The Spring air is described as:

> . . . soft and vibrant with the whir of migratory wild fowl. Rain pools filled the ditches along the road, and lay like stained glass in the low sun; the overhanging willows were in full leaf now, the sedges vividly green and as yet unbowed by a single wind. Such a new, ecstatic world of growth! (pp. 43-44)

One of the significant factors militating against the growth of human relationships in the Oeland community is the constant struggle to cultivate the prairie. It leads to a "sparseness of both physical and spiritual life" (p. 77). There is neither "waste" nor "incontinency" in "human relationships or in plant growth" (p. 77); the land has drained "all their passion and sentiment" (p. 78). Caleb is the extreme illustration of how the land has sapped human feelings. He has transferred all his "passion and sentiment" to the land. He has a tenderness and feeling for it almost beyond that which can exist between two human beings:

> He was absorbed with the process of growth on the land he owned, lending to it his own spirit like physical nourishment.
>
> While he was raptly considering the tender field of flax--now in blue flower--Amelia did not exist to him. There was a transcendent power in this blue field of flax that lifted a man above the petty artifices of birth, life and death. It was more exacting, even, than an invisible God. It demanded not only the good in him, but the evil and the indifference.
>
> Caleb would stand for long moments outside the fence beside the flax. Then he would turn quickly to see that no one was looking. He would creep between the wires and run his hand across the flowering, gentle tops of the growth. A stealthy caress--more intimate than any he had ever given to woman. (p. 119)

The basis of this relationship is that he has total control over his

land; he has tamed it, bent it to his own will.[6] Judith, on the other hand, illustrates everything that is wild and untamed in her relationship with the land. She represents the prairie that is allowed to flourish on its own--uncontrolled growth, wild animals. On one occasion she is described as "the embryonic ecstasy of all life" (p. 33). Her relationship with Sven is as physical as Caleb's relationship with his field of flax, only that Judith wishes neither to tame nor conquer but only to work off her superabundant energy. She is constantly on the verge of rebellion against Caleb, constantly aware of some other life which she knows exists, but cannot quite define:

> She was not an animal, to be driven, and tied, and tended for the value of her plodding strength. She knew what beauty was, and love, and things in no way connected with the rude growth of the land. She had something that Lind had, who was sweet and lovely, as wild honey . . . wild honey . . . who was she to be thinking this? She, Judith, who had hurled an ax with the intent to kill. . . . (p. 188)

Besides the recognition that the struggle to cultivate the land leaves little opportunity for developing human relationships, a parallel is drawn between the growth of human relationships and the natural growth cycle. Lind Archer rejoices over "how the plan of nature for a perfect year had been carried out between her and Mark Jordan" (p. 175). The relationship between the Gare family and nature is woven into a quite different pattern. The farm thrives in cultivated growth. At harvest time, the narrator comments on how:

> Everything was working out smoothly this year, at last, and as it would work out in the years to come. The completion of a perfect cycle: plowing, harrowing, planting, rowing, reaping and threshing. (p. 189)

However, there is no growth or harmony whatsoever, in the relationships within the family. After describing the Summer growing season on the prairie, the narrator remarks how:

> . . . in the life in the Gare household there was no apparent change, no growth or maturing of dreams or fears, no evidence of crises in personal struggle, no peak of achievement rapturously reached. There was no outward emotion or expressed thought save that which led as a great tributary to the flow of Caleb's ambition. (p. 75)

Amelia has determined to isolate herself wholly from Caleb's children for Mark Jordan's sake; Caleb is hated by his wife and children. The relationship between the children is the functional one which exists between workers. They share a pity for Amelia because they know that Caleb takes out any of their transgressions on her. Except for Judith, they are even stunted in their physical growth. Caleb describes them as "twisted and gnarled and stunted as the growth on the bush land he owned, and barren as had been his acres before he had put his own life's blood into them for a meagre yield" (p. 59). On one occasion, Amelia decides that:

> Caleb's children could wither and fall like rotten plants after frost. . . . She would see them dry and fade into fruitlessness and grow old long before their time, but her heart would keep within itself and there would be no pity in her for the destruction of their youth. (p. 88)

The mystery of the universe frames Wild Geese. Humanity's only defense against the loneliness of the vast cosmos is "to cleave together" or to seek a meaning in the rhythms of nature. The water hens in Gabrielle Roy's La Petite Poule D'Eau also form a connection between human relationships, nature and the cosmos. Their function is to bring all three together in harmony rather than in the fear and dread of Wild Geese.

The dance of the water hens inspires le Père Joseph-Marie's sermon on charity in which the aspirations of various souls towards God is compared to the flight of different birds. "Le gracieux bal des poules des prairies"[7] becomes the open air dance at the end of the book, which is attended by all the people who live around La Petite Poule d'Eau.

CHAPTER III

AN APPROACH TO UNIFIED NARRATION

The narration in Wild Geese and Dans le Muskeg is multiple because several points of view are accommodated within the récit. In each case, the narrator maintains a distance from the syntagmatic level, the on-going narrative, by a sequence of impersonal commentary which informs the paradigmatic level. In Gabrielle Roy's Rue Deschambault, Christine, the narrator, also has this "double vision", with the significant difference that she is personally involved on both the sequential level and the level of commentary. The histoire is Christine's growing consciousness of her identity. The syntagmatic level of the récit describes her family life as a child, through adolescence until she leaves home as a schoolteacher, whilst the paradigmatic level provides commentary from an older Christine. Rue Deschambault is an example of a structure which has multiple narration, a paradigmatic récit and a representative histoire.

The narrative blocks in Wild Geese and Dans le Muskeg are closely linked on the syntagmatic level; those in Rue Deschambault are self-contained episodes which, like the individual tales in The Canterbury Tales,[1] fulfill their own purpose while, at the same time, they contribute to the total structure of the book. An example of this is "Petite misère" in which Christine is deeply upset when her father reproaches her, wondering why he ever had any children. Later on, he tries to show that he did not really mean what he had said by making her favourite pie. Christine uses this leaden offering to knot together the paradigms of the

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story:[2] "Et comment alors, à travers mon pauvre chagrin d'enfant ai-je si bien pressenti celui combien plus lourd de mon père, le poids de la vie: cette indigeste nourriture que ce soir, comme si c'était pour toujours, mon père m'offrait!"[3]

The first story, "Les deux nègres", introduces the child first person narrator, Christine, her parents and family, their house and neighbours, the street they live on, and the suggestion of travel and wider horizons outside the family circle, with the arrival of the two negro lodgers. Each of the subsequent stories builds up some aspect of this ground plan and several of them can be linked together to form larger narrative blocks. "Alicia" and "Un bout de ruban jaune" develop the relationship between Christine and her family; "Petite misère", "Les déserteuses", "Le puits de Dunrea", "Le jour et la nuit" relate to Christine and her parents; Christine, herself, is the main topic in "Mon chapeau rose", "Ma coqueluche", "Wilhelm", "La voix des étangs", "Les bijoux" and "Gagner ma vie"; travel and extra-familial linkages are worked out in "Pour empêcher un mariage", "L'italienne", "Ma tante Thérésina Veilleux" and "Le Titanic". The narrator's growing awareness of her identity in relation to either her parents, family, relatives or outsiders is the common denominator in each of the stories. They are juxtaposed in such a way as to reflect this progression; in the first eleven stories the narrator is a child, in the next five she is an adolescent, whilst in the last she is a schoolteacher in a prairie town. The first eleven stories concentrate on parents, family and outsiders, the last six, culminating in "Gagner ma vie", are dominated by the narrator's own

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sense of what she is and what she will be.

Like the narrators in Wild Geese and Dans le Muskeg, Christine establishes her distance from the stories she tells through commentary. This commentary views the past in the light of future experience. The narrator, a woman looking back on her childhood, adolescence and young adulthood, tries continually to tie up the memories of her past life with her awareness of what she now is. In "Pour empêcher un mariage", she overhears her mother and older sister arguing about the latter's proposed marriage. She then comments on the future effect made on her by her sister's declaration that she is going to marry her fiancé because she loves him, "Après, moi, presque toute ma vie, je n'ai pu entendre un être humain dire: 'J'aime . . .' sans avoir le coeur noué de crainte et vouloir de mes deux bras entourer, protéger cet être si exposé . . ." (p. 52). In "Ma coqueluche" she dates her love of nature from the time when, convalescing from whooping cough, she lies outside in a hammock:

> J'ai découvert en ce temps-là presque tout ce que je n'ai jamais cessé de tant aimer dans la nature: le mouvement des feuilles d'un arbre quand on les voit d'en bas, sous leur abri; leur envers, comme le ventre d'une petite bête, plus doux, plus pâle, plus timide que leur face. Et, au fond, tous les voyages de ma vie, depuis, n'ont été que des retours en arrière pour tâcher de ressaisir ce que j'avais tenu dans le hamac et sans le chercher. (p. 73)

The narrator frequently ties up the paradigms of her story and her assessment of their significance in a question mark or hypothesis. In "Les déserteuses" she ponders the relationship between her mother and father:

> Comme c'est navrant! Car, si papa s'était comporté parmi nous comme parmi les étrangers, et maman avec lui comme en son absence, est-ce qu'ils n'auraient pas été parfaitement heureux ensemble? (p. 97)

This vertical distance from the syntagmatic progress of her narrative which Christine establishes through commentary, is reinforced symbolically by a sequence of vertical positions which she takes up in several of the stories. The first of these is the attic in "Petite misère" to which she ascends in order to work out her sorrow over a reproach from her father, "Je m'enfuis, je courus à mon grenier où, face par terre, je grattai le plancher rugueux de mes ongles, je cherchai à y entrer pour mourir" (p. 31). Eventually she looks up and sees, through the skylight window, the clouds in the sky and the branches of two huge elm trees planted by her father. She decides that this scene is exclusively hers since nobody else is high enough up to see it:

> Deux grands ormes plantés par mon père poussaient leurs plus hautes branches jusqu'au bord de ma lucarne, et, en tendant un peu le cou, je les voyais se balancer; et cela aussi devait être pour moi seule, puisqu'il n'y avait que moi d'assez haut perchée pour surprendre les branches supérieures de nos ormes. Et alors, plus que jamais je désirai mourir, à cause de cette émotion qu'un arbre suffisait à me donner . . . traître, douce émotion! me révélant que le chagrin a des yeux pour mieux voir à quel point ce monde est beau! (pp. 31-32)

This desire to die becomes the need to escape from the locked garden at her aunt's house in "Mon chapeau rose". Her cousins' swing serves the same function as the attic window; Christine is able to see what is outside the garden by swinging herself as high as she can:

> Quand j'étais assez haut dans le ciel, j'étais contente. Mais chaque fois que redescendait l'escarpolette, je me trouvais dans un jardin minuscule, enfermée de tous côtés. Mes trois cousines étaient en bas, au pied des deux petits arbres, assises sur des chaises de cuisine. C'étaient des petites filles élevées pieusement et sévèrement; l'une ravaudait du linge à menus, menus points; l'autre tricotait un grand bas noir; la troisième

> lisait dans un gros livre, à voix pointue et monocorde. Elle en était à saint Ignace . . . la petite voix pleurarde me poursuivait quand je montais dans les airs. Là-haut, je retrouvais la grand'route, des collines bleues et aussi la maison des deux vieux pelotonnés sur leur perron. Je me donnais de formidables élans pour aller de plus en plus haut. Le balancement finit par me donner mal au coeur. Descendue de l'escarpolette, je cherchai de tous côtés une sortie de ce jardin malingre. Ma tante avait attaché la barrière avec une grosse corde bien raide. Sans doute maman l'avait-elle avertie de mes goûts de vagabondage. (p. 42)

In "Ma coqueluche" Christine spends most of her convalescence from whooping cough lying in a hammock. Rather than seek any physical escape, she passes the time exploring the lands of her imagination.[4] She imagines that the hammock is a ship on which she takes several voyages:

> Ou bien encore, dans le hamac, être comme dans une haute caravelle qui atteint les mers du Sud . . . et déjà on entend le tam-tam des îles; la reine s'apprête à nous faire manger des petites tortues et des fruits; dans le haut d'un palmier est grimpé un petit Nègre tout nu que le vent berce comme une plume. . . . Ah! voilà des jeux auxquels il vaut la peine de se livrer! (p. 74)

In "La voix des étangs" the attic becomes the place to which Christine ascends, as an adolescent, in order to puzzle over questions about her identity:

> J'allais encore souvent dans mon grenier, même quand je fus une élève studieuse, même quand je fus un peu plus âgée et au bord de ce qu'on appelle la jeunesse. Qu' allais-je faire là-haut? J'avais seize ans, peut-être, le soir où j'y montai comme pour me chercher moi-même. Que serais-je plus tard? . . . Que ferais-je de ma vie? . . . Oui, voilà les questions que je commençais à me poser. Sans doute pensais-je que le temps était venu de prendre des décisions au sujet de mon avenir, au sujet de cette inconnue de moi-même que je serais un jour.[5] (pp. 218-219)

In this story, the attic becomes a point of repose between the call of childhood, evoked by the song of the grasshoppers in the pools near

Christine's house, and the compulsion she feels to set out into the unknown future.[6] It combines the imaginary voyages in the hammock with the desire to escape provoked by the swing in the locked garden:

> Et voici que ce soir-là, comme je me penchais par la petite fenêtre du grenier et vers le cri des étangs proches, m'apparurent, si l'on peut dire qu'ils apparaissent, ces immenses pays sombres que le temps ouvre devant nous. Oui, tel était le pays qui s'ouvrait devant moi, immense, rien qu'à moi et cependant tout entier à découvrir.
>
> Les grenouilles avaient enflé leurs voix jusqu'à en faire, ce soir-là, un cri de détresse, un cri triomphal aussi . . . comme s'il annonçait un départ. J'ai vu alors, non pas ce que je deviendrais plus tard, mais qu'il me fallait me mettre en route pour le devenir. Il me semblait que j'étais à la fois dans le grenier et, tout au loin, dans la solitude de l'avenir; et que, de là-bas, si loin engagée, je me montrais à moi-même le chemin, je m'appelais et me disais: "Oui, viens, c'est par ici qu'il faut passer . . ." (p. 219)

Christine's sensation of being two people, of watching her other self, is further complicated when she confides to her mother that she wants to be a writer. In return, her mother points out how a writer must live on two levels:

> "Ecrire", me dit-elle tristement, "c'est dur. Ce doit être ce qu'il y a de plus exigeant au monde . . . pour que ce soit vrai, tu comprends! N'est-ce pas se partager en deux, pour ainsi dire: un qui tâche de vivre, l'autre qui regarde, qui juge. . . ." (p. 221)

Within the framework provided in Rue Deschambault by this divided Christine--one who tries to live, the other who looks and evaluates--the house and travel to and from the home become the main paradigms weaving the stories together.[7] If Christine moves towards freedom from the shelter of her home and family, her mother illustrates the desire for freedom thwarted by the captivity of family responsibilities. In

"Les déserteuses" she confides to Christine how much she would like to be free:

> Penchées sur le parapet, nous avons longtemps regardé les mouettes. Et tout à coup, sur le pont maman me dit qu'elle aimerait pouvoir aller où elle voudrait, quand elle voudrait. Maman me dit qu'elle avait encore envie d'être libre; elle me dit que ce qui mourait en dernier lieu dans le coeur humain ce devait être le goût de la liberté; que même la peine et les malheurs n'usaient pas en elle cette disposition pour la liberté. (p. 88)

When she returns with Christine from her journey to Quebec, undertaken without her husband's permission, the transfiguration which she undergoes as she recalls what happened, forestalls her husband's anger:

> Peu à peu nous nous approchions tous de maman pour mieux voir ses yeux qui, avant que ses lèvres les disent, annonçaient les paysages. Car, avant de les tirer de son souvenir, son regard les caressait, elle leur souriait, tout en jouant un peu avec le petit collier de perles fausses à son cou.
>
> Papa eut une larme à l'oeil, qu'il oublia d'essuyer. Timidement, il demanda d'autres détails: le vieux pommier contre la grange existait-il toujours? Restait-il quelque chose du verger? Et maman les lui donna vrais et touchants. Sur son visage, les souvenirs étaient comme des oiseaux en plein vol. (p. 122)

Memories like birds in full flight are a kind of counterpoint to Christine's attic, swing and hammock which are starting points for movement into the future.

The following story gives another dimension to the paradigm of travel and return. It is about Christine's father whose job consisted in travelling throughout the west of Canada settling colonies of immigrants. "Le puits de Dunrea" tells how he loses the colony of which he was most proud, in a prairie fire. In contrast to the close contact between Christine and her mother in "Les déserteuses", Christine hears this

story second-hand. Her father tells it to Agnès who then tells it to the rest of the family. If Christine's mother wants to take wings and be free, her husband finds his repose sheltering from the prairie fire in the well at Dunrea:

> C'est ce que l'angoissa le plus, quand il y repensa plus tard: que tout, au fond du puits, fut devenu si morne, si éteint, si extraordinairement silencieux. Il n'avait pas pensé à nous; il n'éprouvait que le repos, un repos si grand qu'on ne pouvait y résister. Voilà ses propres paroles: "Ni regrets, ni espoir, ni désirs: un état de repos complet". Au fond du puits, c'est à peine s'il arrivait à se souvenir de la vie, d'avoir vécu. Et comment avoir le goût de revenir d'une si profonde indifférence! Papa se croyant mort s'étonnait tout juste que la mort fût si sombre, glaciale, vide . . . et si reposante . . . que dans la mort il n'y eut plus d'affections possibles. Au-dedans de lui c'était le désert, comme au-dessus de sa tête c'était aussi le désert à Dunrea. (p. 141)

When Christine's mother returned from her journey, her family were spell-bound by the animation in her face as she relived her adventures; in contrast, when their father returns with his eyebrows half burnt, he only tells them "le superficiel de son aventure, comment il avait perdu une colonie" (p. 143). The divergent natures of Christine's parents is worked out further in "Le jour et la nuit". Her mother is "une créature du jour" (p. 237), while, after his retirement, her father comes alive only at night.

Another travel motif which links together several of the stories is that of leaving home; Odette waving her handkerchief from the train, as she leaves to be a nun, underlines the pathos of Alicia, who is mentally ill, waving her hand to her mother and Christine when they come to visit her:

> Un seul instant donc, nous fûmes nous-mêmes en Alicia, et Alicia fut elle-même en nous, et nous étions sur une même rive, proches à nous toucher, à nous voir. . . . Puis le désespoir a emporté Alicia. Elle a commencé de s'éloigner; et, tout à coup, une sombre rivière invisible s'est creusée entre nous. Alicia, sur l'autre rive, prenait de la distance . . . mystérieusement . . . elle se retirait. J'ai eu le goût de l'appeler, tant elle était loin déjà. Et elle, comme quelqu'un qui va disparaître, elle a levé la main, elle l'a agitée vers nous. (p. 158)

"La voix des étangs", in which Christine contemplates her future move from home as a voyage into the unknown, is immediately followed by "La tempête" where Christine and her cousins set out for a dance in a neighbour's house during a terrible winter storm. As they become completely lost and as they grope blindly in the blizzard to keep in contact with each other, the story becomes the nightmare of finding one's way through the dark unknown:

> Nous avions très froid. Nos épaules en tremblaient. Nous sommes ressortis de la cabane en une petite file, chacun tenant bien serré la queue du manteau de l'autre. Et nous nous sommes appliqués à distinguer derrière la tempête quelque aspect de la réalité. Je gardai les yeux ouverts malgré la neige; elle était comme une flamme, transperçant les prunelles. Cependant, tout ce qui n'était pas offert à sa brûlure, les pieds, le dos, les mains, gelait. Alors j'ai découvert comme une vague et lugubre forme qui ressemblait à quelque terrifiante maison perdue, jamais habitée, jamais éclairée, un affreux spectre d'habitation. (p. 231)

These paradigms are rewoven in the last story, "Gagner ma vie". Christine has left home to take up her first appointment as a schoolteacher in a prairie town. Rather than being lost and insecure, the final vignette of the story shows Christine in the school-house with her pupils during the first severe snow storm of the winter. She remarks how she would be happy enough to stay there all the time: "Un moment, j'ai pensé:

'Comme ce serait amusant d'être emprisonnée ici avec les enfants deux ou trois jours de suite, tout le temps peut-être!" (p. 259). Christine has finally exchanged her family home in Rue Deschambault for her own school-house on the prairie. In retrospect she feels that this was one of the happiest moments of her life:

> Mais nous, ensemble, nous avions chaud. Les deux petits répétèrent les mots de leur lecon. Tout près de nous, la tempête comme un enfant incompris pleurait et trépignait à la porte. Et je ne le savais pas tout à fait encore--nos joies mettent du temps parfois à nous rattraper--mais j'éprouvais un des bonheurs les plus rares de ma vie. Est-ce que le monde n'était pas un enfant? Est-ce que nous n'étions pas au matin? (p. 260)

As the paradigms of travel and the house become charged with the significance of such aspects of Christine's identity as freedom and finding her way, they become metaphors for her mind. Not only do they weave the stories about Christine and her family together, but they also provide a link between the latter stories and those not directly connected with Christine's family. "Le Titanic", which recalls the sinking of the Titanic on a foggy night, follows immediately upon "Ma coqueluche" in which Christine imagines that her hammock is a ship and that she is travelling to foreign lands. It also looks forward to "La tempête" when Christine and her cousins fear that they may be lost for ever in the blizzard. The block of consecutive stories made up of "Alicia", "Ma tante Thérésina Veilleux" and "L'italienne" are also interconnected. Christine's escape from the locked garden in "Mon chapeau rose" and the hiding place in "Alicia" where Christine and Alicia used to picnic, form a pathetic combination when Christine and her mother go to visit Alicia in the prison-like asylum:

> Mais d'où vient que malgré ce parc la maison parût n'avoir d'issue nulle part? Peut-être à cause d'une clôture en fer, tout autour . . . Je me suis rappelé le champ de mais; là, on était enfermé, c'est vrai, mais c'était tout autre chose! . . . La liberté, est-ce que ce ne serait pas de rester en un tout petit espace d'où l'on peut sortir si l'on veut?[8] (pp. 154-155)

The pattern becomes more intricate in "Ma tante Thérésina Veilleux". Christine's asthmatic aunt, unable to brave the harsh Canadian climate, exchanges one little stuffy room for another until she eventually reaches the Californian sun in her old age. She dies soon afterwards and is buried in a tiny cemetery which enjoys ideal weather conditions. In "L'Italienne" Guiseppe Sariano is an immigrant from Milan who builds a house beside Christine's family's house in preparation for the arrival of his ailing wife. Ironically, it is Guiseppe who dies rather than his wife. She brings him back in his coffin to bury him in the Italian sun.

The structure of Rue Deschambault, then, has a representative histoire, a paradigmatic récit and multiple narration. The histoire is Christine's growing awareness of her identity. In Sinclair Ross's As For Me and My House the histoire also involves the awareness of a female consciousness. Unlike Christine, whose older self maintains a distance between the syntagmatic level and the paradigmatic level of the récit, Mrs. Bentley's story has no such "double vision". It is told totally from her present viewpoint. Rather than growing in awareness, her point of view remains static. While the récit of Rue Deschambault emphasizes the paradigmatic level, that of As For Me and My House favours the syntagmatic level, what Jakobson called the metonymic digression "from the plot to the atmosphere and from the characters to the setting in

space and time." It consists of a single unframed narrative block. There is no direct authorial commentary. Its narration is unified rather than multiple. In order to demonstrate some of the complexity of Mrs. Bentley's single vision and, ultimately, to suggest the complexity of the total structure of the book, I have concentrated on her use of space. Using some of the points made by Edward T. Hall in his book, The Hidden Dimension, I will, first of all, indicate how space is used in the text, and then, use this study to suggest how the paradigmatic level is contained within the dominant syntagmatic level. I will then discuss how the narration which is unified from Mrs. Bentley's point of view, becomes multiple from the reader's point of view.

Hall, an anthropologist, makes man's use of space in public and in private the subject of this book. He has coined the term "proxemics" to stand for "the interrelated observations and theories of man's use of space as a specialized elaboration of culture".[9] The keystone of his thesis is that there is always a two-way conversation between man and the world he lives in. Because of this, everyone is surrounded by his own invisible bubble of space which has measurable dimensions. The Hidden Dimension analyses the factors which make up this space bubble or sphere, and lays down some guidelines for their classification.

Hall recognizes three levels in his proxemic classification system. He calls them the infracultural level, the precultural level, and the microcultural level. The first of these, the infracultural, is behavioral and rooted in man's biological past. Man in his evolution has learned many patterns of behaviour. For example, experiments which

showed the stressful effects of overcrowding in animals, suggest that part of man's evolution was due to the fact that his sense of smell ceased to develop and his powers of sight were greatly enhanced. This brought about an "alteration in the relationship between humans" (p. 39), making it less "involved and intense" (p. 40), because "if humans had noses like rats, they would be forever tied to the full array of emotional shifts occurring in persons around them" (p. 39). The human situation has been redefined by this "shift from reliance on the nose to reliance on the eye" (p. 40):

> Man's ability to plan has been made possible because the eye takes in a larger sweep; it codes vastly more complex data and thus encourages thinking in the abstract. Smell, on the other hand, while deeply emotional and sensually satisfying, pushes man in just the opposite direction. (p. 40)

Another important aspect of the infracultural level is territoriality "by which an organism characteristically lays claim to an area and defends it against members of its own species" (p. 7).

The second proxemic level, the precultural, is based in physiology. Unlike the infracultural level, which is rooted in the past, the precultural level is very much in the present. It is that level where space is viewed as "the impingement of physical forces on the sensory receptors" (p. 41). Hall points out that we perceive our space in two ways. The first is through the distance receptors--the eyes, ears and nose. These are concerned with the examination of distant objects, and the spaces which they generate are respectively, visual, auditory and olfactory space. The second means of perceiving our space is through the immediate receptors, which are "those used to examine the world

close up--the world of touch, the sensations we receive from the skin, membranes and muscles" (p. 41). Hall calls these tactile and thermal space. Generally speaking, the eyes are the dominant space perceptors. Referring to visual space, Hall distinguishes between the "visual field" and the "visual world". What this simply means is that there is a difference between what the eye sees and what the whole man sees. Vision is not just what the retina records. The visual field, in fact, is unconsciously corrected by sensory data from other sources. Vision is, then, a synthesis of the information received from some or all of the other senses. Not only do we have to learn to talk, we also learn to see.

The third proxemic level is the microcultural and is the one on which most spatial observations are made. It has three aspects which Hall calls fixed-feature space, semi-fixed-feature space and informal space. Fixed-feature space is an extension of territoriality on the infra-cultural level. It is "one of the basic ways of organizing the activities of individuals and groups" (p. 103):

> It includes material manifestations as well as the hidden, internalized designs that govern behavior as man moves about on this earth. Buildings are one expression of fixed-feature patterns, but buildings are also grouped together in characteristic ways as well as being divided internally according to culturally determined designs. The layout of villages, towns, cities, and the intervening countryside is not haphazard but follows a plan which changes with time and culture. (p. 103)

Semi-fixed feature space involves such questions as the relationship between furniture and conversation. Hall gives the example of how some spaces like railway waiting rooms tend to keep people apart, whereas other spaces, "such as the booths in the old-fashioned drugstore or the

tables at a French sidewalk cafe, tend to bring people together" (p. 108). Finally, informal space categorizes the distances maintained by an individual in his encounters with others. Hall discusses these under four headings: intimate distance, personal distance, social distance and public distance. My concern is with intimate distance, which Hall summarizes as that in which:

> . . . the presence of the other person is unmistakable and may at times be overwhelming because of the greatly stepped-up sensory inputs. Sight (often distorted), olfaction, heat from the other person's body, sound, smell and feel of the breath all combine to signal unmistakable involvement with another body. (p. 116)

Mrs. Bentley's use of space in As For Me and My House can be analysed with reference to this outline. My suggestion is that the récit is dominated by her construction of the space around her. The entries in her diary, which make up the syntagmatic level of the narrative, are primarily an exposition of her spatial sphere. The three proxemic levels are forcefully in evidence. The most powerful is the precultural or physiological level--the perception of her space through the distance and the immediate receptors. She often describes Philip in terms of the immediate receptors--thermal and tactile space. On one occasion, when she puts her hand on his shoulder, she describes how she "felt the bone and muscles click up hard together";[10] again, "his shoulder under my hand was like a lump of stone" (p. 89). The night after they find out that Steve is to be taken away from them, she tells how:

> We both lay awake most of the night. I could feel the strain of his rigid, aching muscles. Once I pressed closer to him, as if I were stirring in my sleep, but

> when I put my hand on his arm there was a sharp little contraction against my touch, and after a minute I shifted again, and went back to my own pillow. (p. 116)

Her personal kinesthetic awareness comes out in such instances as "I was wrinkling to my marrow" (p. 128); when Philip discovers the paints she had ordered for him, she says "I turned my page and read hard a minute, going all gooseflesh as I felt him looking at me" (p. 89). Sometime before she is due to play a piano solo for the Ladies Aid production, she tells how:

> Right this minute I'm playing as I'm going to play two weeks from Friday--sitting here staring across the room at the piano, playing with every nerve and bone and muscle in my body. El Greco gets up and whines, looks at me for a minute with his glass-green eyes, then lies down again. There's a long swift ripping sound as Philip tears up another poster. Then it's still again, and I go on and play. The fever way. And the whole house has tingles. (p. 143)

Her awareness of her thermal space is apparent in such descriptions as Philip's lips were "cold with dogged iron" (p. 32), "his hand was still warm and insistent" (p. 23), or, "the musician in me dies hard, and a word of praise still sends my blood accelerando" (p. 8).

With reference to the distance receptors, Mrs. Bentley's sense of olfactory space is brought out by her dislike of the smell of the past in her house:

> And most depressing of all is the smell of the place. Not a bad aggressive smell, just a passive, clinging one--just the wraith of a smell. Stop a minute deliberately to sniff and it isn't there; go on with what you are doing and it's back to haunt your nostrils with a vague suggestion of musty shelves, repression and decay.
>
> Philip says it's my imagination, but I catch him sniffing too. In a combative mood this morning I washed the floors

> with a strong carbolic disinfectant; but now as the reek of cleanliness subsides it comes again, this same faint exhalation of the past. (pp. 12-13)

On one occasion, she recalls how the smell of a pipe used to bring Philip and herself closer together. Discovering an old pipe in the house, she confesses that:

> It brought a little tightness to my throat for a minute, the old smoky smell of it, the thought that we aren't the only ones. . . . It was easier when Philip smoked. The silences were less strained, the study door between us less implacable. The pipe belonged to both of us. We were partners in conspiracy. (p. 14)

Auditory space is revealed in such terms as "for the rest of the meal we were silent, clinking our teacups, listening to the wind" (p. 147), or "supper again was one of those brittle meals through whose tight-lipped silences you can fairly see the dart of nerves". (p. 24).

Mrs. Bentley's piano playing is an extension of her auditory space:

> Tomorrow I must play the piano again, play it and hammer it and charge with it to the town's complete annihilation. Even though Philip slams a door or two and starts his pacing. For both our sakes, I must. (p. 13)

The only evidence she has of the seduction scene is Judith's laugh:

> Then I heard her laugh. A frightened, soft, half-smothered little laugh, that I've laughed often with him too. There's no other laugh like it. (p. 123)

Her wish to possess her husband is a function of her infra-cultural conditioning--he is her territory:

> All these years I've been trying to possess him, to absorb his life into mine, and not once has he ever yielded. I remember the year he was working on his book. It was his book; there was no place in it for me. There used to be something almost threatening in the way he would close his study door. His book--his world. Already I had encroached too far. I was something to be defied, held at arm's

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> distance. He wrote, and I kept out of his way, hoed and weeded in the garden. It was temperament, I said, the artist in him. (p. 64)

She is jealous because "Steve possesses him" (p. 110), and even invites Judith to supper so that she can gloat over how little Judith actually means to Philip:

> I think that was maybe why I asked her--to watch her eyes follow him, her breathing quicken a little--to look then at him, and know how completely it was wasted. My possession now is little more than nominal, but still it's more than hers; and perhaps valuing it even more as it wears thin and crumbles, I'm not above gloating over the shadow of it that is left. (p. 109)

When she is sick in bed, she wishes it was Philip rather than herself so that he would have to rely on her:

> I think it's what I've really been wishing ever since we met. He's always been so strong and self-sufficient; his illnesses he's thrown off by sheer stubborn will power rather than lie helpless and dependent upon me. And just for once I'd like to have him helpless enough really to need me, to give me a chance to reach him, prove myself. (p. 122)

Philip's study and Mrs. Bentley's garden are examples of how territoriality becomes fixed-feature space on the microcultural proxemic level. Other fixed-feature patterns in As For Me and My House are Mrs. Bentley's awareness of her house as a false front, and her hostility to Horizon and the other Main Streets she has lived on. The most striking example of microcultural space in the book, is the distance maintained between Mrs. Bentley and Philip. I pointed out above how the intimate distance is that where "the presence of the other person is unmistakable and may at times be overwhelming because of the greatly stepped up sensory inputs". From the instances which I have already given of Mrs. Bentley's kinesthetic awareness of Philip, it must be

obvious that she attempts to maintain the intimate distance between them. This is also brought out by her frequent close-up descriptions of the features of his face, particularly his eyes. He is "white and clenched, his eyes two little drills of steel" (p. 61); there is "a glare still in his eyes", his lips white, "his forehead knotted" (p. 66). She claims that she despises herself, but cannot stop "the way I watch his face for a flicker of awareness or desire; the way I gauge the pressure of my hand against his sleeve, so quick and hungry, all the time so absorbed in the little sketch he's been doing" (p. 152). Philip's frequent retreats into his study, and his obvious tension when his wife gets too close to him, suggest that her penetration of his personal spatial sphere is unwelcome.

Hall distinguishes between "the visual world" and "the visual field": "sensory data from other sources are used to correct what is actually recorded by the retina". Vision is a synthesis of some or all of the senses. Mrs. Bentley is an excellent example of this synthesis. Not only are her descriptions of Philip influenced by the information which she receives from her other senses, but also those of her house and the weather. Her vision of her house is coloured by her sensation of kinesthetic oppression. She looks "at the dull bare walls, my shoulders drawn up round my ears to resist their cold damp stillness (p. 5). The low ceilings and the "sly, crafty-looking windows", (p. 25) make it "hard to laugh or speak naturally (p. 25):

> I find myself walking on tiptoe, setting things down with elaborate care lest they let out a rattle or clang. Even the piano, it seems oppressed and chilled by the cold, dingy walls. I can't make it respond to me or bring it to life. (p. 25)

They are "tense and wary" because of the wind blowing around the house; their "muscles and lungs seem pitted to keep the walls from caving in" (p. 74). The weather is also described mainly in terms of the immediate space receptors, the sensations "from the skin, membranes and muscles":

> It's been really dark today with dust. Everything's gritty, making you shiver and setting your teeth on edge. There's a crunch on the floor like sugar when you walk. We keep the doors and windows closed, and still it works in everywhere. I lay down for a little while after supper, and I could feel it even on the pillow. The air is so dry and choking with it that every few minutes a kind of panic seizes you, and you have an impulse to thresh out against it with your hands. (p. 62)

A rain storm is depicted not only in terms of the immediate receptors but also through olfactory and auditory space:

> The old, moldy smell seems getting thicker. The drip from the ceiling takes three hours to fill a five-pound sirup-pail. I sit here listening to it, shivering and tense from clink to clink, my skin all wrinkled in the damp, my eyes fixed worming along the rusty water stains that are strung like entrails across the ceiling and down the walls. (p. 120)

When they go on holiday to the ranch, Mrs. Bentley realizes that vision can be colored by other sensations. She suggests that they are projecting their fear and uneasiness onto the wilderness environment:

> We've all lived in a little town too long. The wilderness here makes us uneasy. I felt it first the night I walked alone along the river bank--a queer sense of something cold and fearful, something inanimate, yet aware of us. A Main Street is such a self-sufficient little pocket of existence, so smug, compact, that here we feel abashed somehow before the hills, their passiveness, the unheeding way they sleep. We climb them, but they withstand us, remain as serene and unrevealed as ever. The river slips past, unperturbed by our coming and going, stealthily confident. We shrink from our insignificance. The stillness and solitude--we think a force or presence into it--even a hostile presence, deliberate, aligned against us--for we dare not admit an indifferent wilderness, where we may have no meaning at all. (pp. 99-100)

With respect to how the senses other than our eyes influence our vision, Hall makes the point that the perceptual world of the Eskimo is quite different from ours and that "an important feature of this difference is the Eskimo's use of his senses to orient himself in space" (p. 79):

> The direction and the smell of the wind, together with the feel of ice and snow under his feet, provide the cues that enable an Eskimo to travel a hundred or more miles across visually undifferentiated waste. The Avilik have at least twelve different terms for various winds. They integrate time and space as one thing and live in acoustic-olfactory space, rather than visual space. Furthermore, representations of their visual world are like X rays. Their artists put in everything they know is there whether they can see it or not. A drawing or engraving of a man hunting seal on an ice floe will show not only what is on top of the ice (the hunter and his dogs) but what is underneath as well (the seal approaching his breathing hole to fill his lungs with air). (pp. 79-80)

This X ray technique is also used by Mrs. Bentley. She gives an account of what Philip is doing in his study while she is outside:

> He's been in his study since seven o'clock, not reading or drawing, just sitting with his hands clenched, looking straight ahead. I haven't been in, but I know. We've lived together so long that he has no privacy when he's in a mood like this, not even with the study door between us closed. (p. 130)

On another occasion, she goes out for a walk after a row with Philip. Besides her sensation that she is under surveillance from the town, she takes a mental picture of the inside of her house:

> The crunch of footsteps coming towards me made me turn. I came back to the parsonage, hesitated a moment, went on the other way. But still the windows watched me, made me tread uneasily, conscious of myself. Again I turned, again I hesitated, looking at the house. And more vividly than if I had been inside I could see the huddled little rooms, and the old ugly furniture. I felt the strained

> atmosphere, and the iron, doomlike silence of his study door. And in anticipation of it dread and despondency came up again and filled my throat with stone. (p. 145)

A variation of this process occurs when she projects what she imagines is going on outside into her house. Thinking that Philip has gone out to meet Judith, she sees them together as in a film:

> There was a listening, pressing emptiness through the house. It began to hover round me, to dim the room, at last to merge with the yellow lamp flame like a haze. And then on the smooth expanse of it as on a screen my dread began to live and shape itself. I saw them meet. I saw her white face. Over and over. And I couldn't stand it. I paced, shook up the fire--paced, paced--and then I put my hat and coat on, and went outside. (p. 137)

When the Bentley's entertain the minister and his wife from the next town, Mrs. Bentley confesses afterwards how "over the tea and sponge cake I had a few gaunt moments, looking down a corridor of years and Horizons, at the end of which was a mirror and my own reflection" (p. 82). Another time she remarks how no matter where she goes she seems to be seeing herself or leaving an imprint of herself:

> The house was too small, too oppressive with its faint old smell of other lives. And the little town outside was somehow too much like a mirror.
>
> Or better, like a whole set of mirrors. Ranged round me so that at every step I met the preacher's wife, splayfooted rubbers, dowdy coat and all. I couldn't escape. The gates and doors and windows kept reminding me.
>
> Hurrying along I had a curious sense of leaving imprints of myself. I crossed the town, took the road that runs beneath the five grain elevators, left it for drier walking on the railroad track--but all the way back to the parsonage, no matter how fast or far I walked, the imprints still were there. (p. 23)

Mrs. Bentley's descriptions of what is going on around her and her analyses of Philip and the relationship which exists between them are

all extensions of her spatial sphere--imprints of herself. She comments on how Philip "has a way of building in his own image" (p. 6). She takes this even further in her analysis of Mrs. Finley, President of the Ladies Aid:

> She's an alert, thin-voiced, thin-featured little woman, up to her eyes in the task of managing the town and making it over in her own image. I'm afraid it may mean some changes for Philip and me too, for there's a crusading steel in her eye to warn she brooks no half-way measures. The deportment and mien of her own family bear witness to a potter's hand that never falters. Her husband, for instance, is an appropriately meek little man, but you can't help feeling what an achievement is his meekness. It's like a tight wire cage drawn over him, and words and gestures, indicative of a more expansive past, keep squeezing through it the same way that parts of the portly Mrs. Wenderby this afternoon kept squeezing through the back and sides of Philip's study armchair. (pp. 5-6)

In this passage Mrs. Bentley gives an insightful account of what she herself, in fact, has done in her descriptions of Philip: she builds him up in her own image and moulds him with a "potter's hand that never falters". Her portrayal of Philip is distorted because, on the one hand, she is too close to him to see him properly, and, on the other hand, he is a projection from her visual world.[11]

Finally, a paradoxical relationship exists between Mrs. Bentley and Horizon. She claims that she does not want to be a false front and that she has always been repressed by the Main Streets she has lived on. Discussing American city life, Hall remarks how "our urban spaces provide little excitement or visual variation and virtually no opportunity to build a kinesthetic repertoire of spatial experience" (p. 62). This is because:

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> Man's sense of space is closely related to his sense of self, which is in an intimate transaction with his environment. Man can be viewed as having visual, kinesthetic, tactile, and thermal aspects of his self which may be either inhibited or encouraged to develop by his environment. (p. 63)

Far from inhibiting Mrs. Bentley, Horizon gives her every opportunity "to build a kinesthetic repertoire of spatial experience"--she thrives on Main Streets. Philip, on the other hand, is inhibited; though, if Mrs. Bentley is as manipulative as I am suggesting, Philip's inhibitions will be primarily due to her, rather than to the Church or Main Streets. She is the repressive fixed-feature in his spatial sphere.[12]

Whereas the structures of Rue Deschambault, Dans le Muskeg and Wild Geese are made up of a sequence of interwoven narrative blocks framed by direct commentary from the implied author, the structure of As For Me and My House consists of a single narrative block unframed by any direct authorial comment. The syntagmatic or metonymical level dominates the paradigmatic or metaphorical level. Nevertheless, although it is not directly stated, the authorial point of view is contained within the syntagmatic level. Many of the features about life in Horizon which Mrs. Bentley describes, particularly landscape and weather, become metaphors[13] and suggest the possibility of view points other than Mrs. Bentley's own. The same point is made by W. H. New when he distinguishes between Mrs. Bentley's diary and "the technique of the book."[14] He shows how dust and rain provide a framework in which Mrs. Bentley's world can be seen from several viewpoints. He argues that, rather than being a weakness, the resulting ambivalence is one of the strengths of

the book:

> In presenting and exploring a single point of view, As For Me and My House runs the danger of seeming shallow, of allowing no aesthetic distance from which we can respond to the narrator as well as participate in her verbal reactions to the world. Fortunately, Ross's technique, his control over the words he allows Mrs. Bentley to use, creates the ironic tension which raises the book from a piece of "regional realism" to a complex study of human responses. Mrs. Bentley herself is all too prone to approve or condemn but Ross would have his readers avoid this. By his images and through the other characters, he shows us, in fact, how Mrs. Bentley's polarization of Horizon (this world, arid, sterile, bad) and the Bookstore (dream, water, fruitful, good) is invalid and gradually breaks down. (p. 31)

The structure of As For Me and My House is, then, a "unified unity" only from the narrator's point of view since it becomes a "multiple unity" from the reader's view point. Whilst, in a structure such as Rue Deschambault, it is one of the narrator's functions to abstract the authorial point of view from the syntagmatic level, in As For Me and My House this becomes the task of the reader.

Philip's drawings provide another metaphor through which the ambivalence between dust and rain, sterility and fertility can be worked out. That Philip feels unfulfilled and repressed can be inferred, not only from Mrs. Bentley's analysis of their life together, but also from his sketches, the most direct paradigm through which he is revealed. The majority of these drawings work out the conflict between the false fronts of Main Streets and the prairie. As a metaphor for Philip's state of mind they break down into prairie/false fronts, freedom/repression. This same dialectic is contained within Philip's study where he has some relief from Mrs. Bentley, who, at the same time, is sitting outside like

his jailer. That the problem with the Bentley's is not where they live but their inability to escape from each other is suggested by their holiday in the wilderness. They are glad to come back to Horizon because they discover that they do not really belong on the ranch. Mrs. Bentley's dried-up garden and Judith's death are extensions, and hence metaphors, of the wilderness that does not bring freedom. That their move to a new town will not be an escape but just a different setting for the same dialectic is suggested by the Bentley's adoption of Philip's illegitimate son by which the paradigm of Philip's life has been set in motion once more.

The difference which exists between the structure of Rue Deschambault and that of As For Me and My House is thrown into relief by considering the structure of another work which is framed by the narrator's consciousness. The récit of Grove's Over Prairie Trails resembles that of Rue Deschambault in that the narrator relates and comments upon events in his past. Seven self-contained narrative blocks are contained within this framework. The narrator describes seven drives which he made with horses and a buggy, in generally unfavourable weather conditions, in order to visit his wife and daughter. Like Christine in Rue Deschambault, he uses the paradigm of travel as a way of exploring his identity. Whereas Christine uses movement to and from the house as the framework within which she examines her future self, the narrator in Over Prairie Trails moves over landscape. As the journeys present an ever increasing challenge, due to the weather, they become tests of the narrator's strength and willpower and, ultimately, metaphors for his mind. Like

Mrs. Bentley's diary, his descriptions of these drives are a manifestation of his use of space. As he describes the trails through fog, mist and blizzard, the narrator's visual world becomes increasingly dependent on senses other than his eyes. While Mrs. Bentley projects her space outwards onto the people and places around her, Grove's narrator projects his space inwards, until on occasions, the external becomes almost totally internalized.[15] The structure of Over Prairie Trails makes it clear that the narrator is talking about himself; that of As For Me and My House is more subtle in that the narrator reveals herself through supposedly authoritarian accounts of the lives of the people around her.

Landscape, weather and the house also become metaphors for the mind in the short stories of Sinclair Ross. Three of these stories, "The Lamp at Noon", "The Painted Door" and "Not by Rain Alone" are similar to As For Me and My House in that the metaphors are contained within the syntagmatic level, but differ from it in that the histoire is conceptual rather than representative. In all three stories, the histoire works out some aspect of how human relationships are affected by the struggle to exist in a hostile prairie environment. The histoire in each case can be compared to that of Wild Geese insofar as it deals with loneliness and the lack of communication between husband and wife. Unlike As For Me and My House, the implied author is present in the stories as the third person narrator, but, like Mrs. Bentley, he allows the récit to evolve through the syntagmatic level; to quote Jakobson once more, he "metonymically digresses from the plot to the atmosphere and from the

characters to the setting in space and time". Although he confines his direct commentary to outward descriptions of the characters, his presence suggests that he is exercising as much control over the *récit* as the more vocal narrators in *Wild Geese*, *Dans le Muskeg* or *Rue Deschambault*. This unstated control becomes evident in the metaphors which grow out of the metonymic level. Although they have a syntagmatic *récit*, these stories have multiple rather than unified narration. Through the medium of the narrator, two points of view (that of the husband and the wife) are presented in the syntagmatic level.

The *histoire* in all three stories deals with the lack of communication between a young married couple. The men spend all their emotions in the physical struggle against the land, while the women feel isolated, lonely and unfulfilled. In "The Lamp at Noon" the *récit* is unfolded through the consciousness of both Paul and Ellen as they struggle against a dust storm on their prairie farm. Because of his inability to accept that his land has become dust, Paul shuts Ellen out of his life. Her subsequent emotional breakdown leads to the death of their child. Dust and the lamp lit in the house at noon become metaphors for the disintegrating relationship between the husband and wife and for their inability to see each others' point of view. The dust "thickening to an impenetrable fog"[16] is suggestive of the barriers growing between Ellen and Paul. The lamp lit during the day and the sun "like a wizened orange" (p. 13) suggest their pathetic attempts to see their way out of the darkness surrounding their marriage. Ellen's eyes fixed "wide in an immobile stare" (p. 23) are in direct contrast to Paul's blindness. The

two winds which Ellen describes blowing through the house, one seeking refuge, the other in pursuit, making her home both a sanctuary and a prison, become the sole means of communication between the husband and wife. As Paul seeks out his sanctuary--the stable--he becomes aware of:

> . . . the wild lipless wailing through the loft. Until at last as he stood there, staring into the livid face before him, it seemed that this scream of wind was a cry from her parched and frantic lips. He knew it couldn't be, he knew that she was safe within the house, but still the wind persisted as a woman's cry. The cry of a woman with eyes like those that watched him through the dark. Eyes that were mad now--lips that even as they cried still pleaded, "See, Paul--I stand like this all day. I just stand still--so caged! If I could only run!" (p. 20)

As he looks at the fields of dust around him, Paul's eyes are suddenly "struck . . . to comprehension" (p. 21). He is too late to prevent Ellen's attempted escape from her situation. As she runs from the house with her son in her arms, the child is smothered, either by the dust or by his mother's over-protective arms.

In the first part of "Not by Rain Alone", which is called, "Summer Thunder", whether Eleanor and Will can get married or not is dictated by the weather. The <u>récit</u> unfolds through Will's consciousness. Since the hoped for rain which should bring Will a good crop and a certain amount of prosperity does not come, they decide to get married anyway. That the drought persisted metaphorically through the first year of their marriage is suggested in the second part, "September Snow", by Eleanor's complaint that "all you think about is crop and cows".[17] The rain that did not come becomes the snow that fills the house when Will had to stay out all night. Like the wind which communicates between

husband and wife in "The Lamp at Noon", the cry of the new-born baby becomes the sole link between Eleanor, who died in childbirth, and her husband:

> There was a hushed, breathless silence, as if sky and snow and sunlight were selfconsciously poised, afraid to wrinkle or dishevel their serenity. Then through it, a faint, jagged little saw of sound, the baby started to cry. He felt a twinge of recognition. He seemed to be listening to the same plaintiveness and protest that had been in Eleanor's voice of late. An impulse seized him to see and hold his baby; but just for a minute longer he stood there, looking out across the sun-spangled snow, listening. (p. 67)

In "The Painted Door" snow becomes the main metaphor for the relationship between Ann and John. The <u>récit</u> concentrates on Ann's consciousness. If it is dark during the daytime in "The Lamp at Noon", warmth in "The Painted Door" brings cold rather than heat. The stasis in their relationship is worked out in terms of a freeze. During their initial conversation Ann talks to the frosted window pane. Through the clear place which she thaws with her breath she describes how the sun's rays on the snow seemed to shed cold rather than warmth. She projects her sense of isolation and loneliness unto the snow and cold. In "the frozen silence of the bitter fields and sun-chilled sky"[18] she equates cold with loneliness, snow with silence. In painting the kitchen woodwork white, she extends her feeling of loneliness and silence through the house. The fierce storm, during which she makes love with Steven believing that John will not be able to get home, becomes a metaphor for the struggle between her repressed self and "her real, unfettered self" (p. 114). When she is asleep, the sense of her husband's presence in their bedroom is conveyed through the shadows from the flames of the

stove. Rather than bringing warmth, she feels that she is in a "frozen wilderness" (p. 115), faced by her husband's "stonelike sorrow", his "stonelike hopelessness" (p. 115). When John is found frozen the next morning, the smear of paint on his palm, which is "white even against its frozen whiteness" (p. 118), points not only to the total freeze in communication between John and Ann, but also to his depth of commitment to her and to his inability to articulate it through any other medium but action.

CONCLUSION

The structures of the works discussed in the second and third chapters can be used to organize a larger body of Western Canadian fiction. This larger body can be divided into two groups. One group of works can be discussed with reference to Primeau's Dans le Muskeg and Ostenso's Wild Geese, while those of a second group can be compared to Roy's Rue Deschambault. Among the first group I have included Grove's Fruits of the Earth and Settlers of the Marsh, Stead's Grain, Bugnet's La Forét and Nypsia, Roys La Petite Poule D'Eau, W. O. Mitchell's Who Has Seen the Wind and McCourt's Music at the Close. The second group consists of Roy's La route d'Altamont, Laurence's The Diviners and A Bird in the House, and Grove's Over Prairie Trails.

Like Dans le Muskeg and Wild Geese, the structures of all the novels in the first group have a conceptual histoire, a paradigmatic récit and multiple narration. The histoire of Dans le Muskeg works out the question of how to compromse between material and spiritual values; that of Wild Geese concentrates on one aspect of spiritual values, which is the two extremes of human contact--warmth and loneliness--and their relationship with nature and the universe. The histoires of all the books which I have listed in the first group develop some aspect of the questions raised in Dans le Muskeg and Wild Geese. The most direct comparison can be made between Fruits of the Earth and Dans le Muskeg in that both books are framed by the concept of finding a compromise between material and spiritual values.[1] In Fruits of the Earth the narrative blocks are

Abe and his family, the Vanbruiks and the settlers of the Spalding district. The paradigmatic framework is clearly outlined in the first chapter when the narrator declares that "Abe had deliberately chosen the material world for the arena of his struggles; the doctor, though he had turned merchant, seemed to live in a world of the spirit".[2] Abe initially sacrifices human relationships for material success. Fruits of the Earth is the story of how he realizes his mistake as his family drifts apart and the moral fibre of the whole community is threatened by the influence of city values. At the end of the book, Abe's acceptance once more of his rôle as leader of the district aligns his function with that of Le Père LeTournec in Dans le Muskeg.

A line could be drawn between the material struggle in Fruits of the Earth through Stead's Grain to The Master of the Mill. They are connected by one aspect of the material struggle--the advent of the machine. While Abe acknowledges the usefulness of machinery, it does not dominate his thinking in the same way as it regulates the lives of the Clarks in The Master of the Mill. On the other hand, Gander, the main narrative block in Grain, provides an example of the process from farm to machine. Grain is structurally flawed in that there is a discrepancy between its paradigmatic and syntagmatic levels. The narrator frames the novel by asserting that Gander is "a farmer born and bred",[3] all of whose "instincts were rooted deep in the soil" (p. 79), while, on the syntagmatic level, Gander clearly develops as a born mechanic.[4]

As already noted, Wild Geese concentrates on the question of spiritual values rather than material ones. At the end of chapter two,

I compared the structures of Wild Geese and La Petite Poule D'Eau in order to show how the same paradigms are treated differently. Whereas, in Wild Geese the paradigmatic level suggests that people should cling together and try to find harmony with nature for fear of "The Great Alone", that of La Petite Poule D'Eau celebrates the concord between people, God and nature. Like Wild Geese, the paradigmatic level of McCourt's Music at the Close concentrates on the concept of loneliness. The main narrative block is Neil Fraser's lonely, unfulfilled life. Gil Reardon presents a contrast to Neil. Neil's loneliness is worked out within the two frameworks of death and idealism. He feels, eventually, that the only reason for living is to find a reason for dying. His death as a soldier, at the end of the book, not only contains the earlier death of Gil Reardon but also becomes symbolic of the ultimate alienation of every man. In the form of darkness, his death permeates the earth and is defused over the entire universe:

> The pain came on again--a wild beast that tore at his entrails--so bad this time that his lips parted in a thin high-pitched scream. But the pain stopped after a while, and the stars faded and the darkness lay over the land, not transparent now but like a heavy shroud. The sound of the guns continued a little while longer, but faint, no more than a barely perceptible muttering, a vibration to be felt rather than a sound to be heard. Then silence, absolute, unbroken. And darkness that enveloped the universe.[5]

If Neil Fraser stands for universal loneliness, Bugnet's Nypsia stands for universal harmony. Whilst Neil's life demonstrates his progressive awareness of how much he is alone, Nypsia's life articulates her growing awareness of where she belongs. Her choice lies between the

English (Monsieur Alec), pagan Indian (Mahigan) and Christian Métis (Vital Lajeunesse). In choosing the Christian Métis, her life becomes part of that type of harmony which reigns over Roy's La Petite Poule D'Eau. In direct contrast to Neil Fraser whose death leads to total abstraction, Nypsia, at the end of the book, is compared to the willows, where, as one critic put it, she is "drawn into the endless cycle of the forest".[6]

> Et les saules devinrent l'énergie, le sang, et l'âme de ce pays. De leurs feuilles régulièrement tombées et dissoutes, ils enrichirent cette terre dévastée. Ils embellissaient de leurs formes nombreuses. De leurs mariages divers, surveillés par la Sagesse, naissaient des enfants toujours plus variés. De tous leurs morts, ils poudraient le bon sol où vinrent ensuite, à leur ombre, germer de grands arbres, qui reforment aujourd'hui la vaste forêt où nos fils trouveront des géants centenaires.[7]

The concepts worked out in Grove's Settlers of the Marsh and Bugnet's La Forêt fall between those of Fruits of the Earth and Music at the Close. In Settlers of the Marsh the two main narrative blocks deal with the lives of two fundamentally lonely people, Neils Lindstedt and Ellen Amundsen. Neils, a young Swedish immigrant, takes up a homestead with the dream of combining material success and a happy family life. He is forced to put material success before human relationships because Ellen has resolved that she will never marry. Within this framework, the main paradigm is Ellen and Neils' respective experiences of family relationships. Neils' total inability to relate to Clara Vogel is caused, in part, by his idealization of his mother, whilst Ellen refuses marriage because of her father's brutal behavior towards her mother.

Tight binding

In Bugnet's La Forêt the main narrative block is a young married couple. Louise and Roger Bourgouin arrive from France and settle in a forested area. The Roys, an older couple who are their only neighbours, provide a contrast. Roger approaches the physical work of cutting down trees with the same attitude as Caleb Gare in Wild Geese. He wants to dominate and conquer the forest. His inexperience leads him into making mistakes. As they struggle to survive, Louise becomes increasingly lonely and frightened and their relationship deteriorates. They grow further and further apart until their only child is drowned. The Roys succeed where Roger and Louise fail because they are experienced homesteaders. They have developed a sense of humour and have learned how to compromise with the land. Instead of trying to overcome or conquer the forest, they see their task as an ongoing struggle in which tactics are more important than brute force. On one occasion, Mme. Roy exclaims as she shakes "une imaginaire terre ennemie":[8]

> "Attends un peu, toi, que je m'y mette! On va voir ça si c'est toi qu'aura le dessus, ou si ça va être moi". On s'agrippe, on se cramponne. Oui, ça au moins c'est du plaisir. (p. 75)

The dialectic between material and spiritual values becomes the dialectic between town and prairie in W. O. Mitchell's Who Has Seen the Wind. The meaning of life is the question framing the novel, with two aspects of life--that of the town and that of the prairie contained within this framework. The main narrative block is Brian's growing awareness of what life is about. In contrast, the Young Ben lives an uncommitted life on the prairie without feeling any compulsion to question his identity.

Rather than growing in understanding, the book suggests that Brian loses understanding in growing up; the only insight that he actually gains is that life is meaningless. That this feeling is tied up with townlife is suggested by the fact that questions about the meaning of life are only asked by people who live in the town (Digby, Rev. Hislop, Milt Palmer, Brian).[9]

As already noted in chapter three, the dialectic between town and prairie life becomes internalized as the struggle between freedom and repression in As For Me and My House. Landscape also becomes a metaphor for the mind in Bugnet's La Forêt. Because Roger wants to conquer, the forest appears to fight back; Louise projects her fear and loneliness onto her environment. The house and the mill in The Master of the Mill may also be seen to reflect the state of mind of their owners.[10] In the same way, the huge mansion which Abe builds in Fruits of the Earth stands as a pathetic monument to materialism, while in Settlers of the Marsh, Neils Lindstedts' progressive demoralization is paralleled by the way the house which he built for his future family becomes a brothel. Neils finds some measure of freedom from his past in jail. In chapter three, I discussed how the two paradigms of travel and the house are interwoven in Rue Deschambault. They become the main paradigms through which Christine ponders her identity. Similarly, in Over Prairie Trails travel and landscape become the means through which the narrator explores his psyche. The house and movement through landscape become the dominant paradigms, and, ultimately, metaphors for the mind in the second group of novels which I have organized around Roy's Rue Deschambault.[11]

Laurence's A Bird in the House and The Diviners, as well as Roy's La route d'Altamont, are similar to the first group of structures in that they have multiple narration and a paradigmatic récit, but differ from it in that they have a representative histoire. In each case the histoire involves the growth in self-awareness of a female consciousness. Like Rue Deschambault and Over Prairie Trails, A Bird in the House is made up of a series of self-contained narrative blocks which fulfill their own purpose while, at the same time, they contribute to the total structure of the book. Both Christine in Rue Deschambault and Vanessa in A Bird in the House relate to their family, neighbours and friends. Christine in La route d'Altamont probes her identity in relation to her mother, as the latter relates to her mother before her, whilst Morag in The Diviners relates to her foster parents and to her own daughter, Piquette.

As in Rue Deschambault, identity in the three books is seen in terms of moving out of the house. In La route d'Altamont and The Diviners this takes the form of moving through one's past by visiting the places from which one's parents and ancestors came; A Bird in the House suggests that it is necessary to escape from parents, grandparents and ancestors. Travel, landscape and the house are used to parallel the state of mind and as focal points for formulating ideas about freedom, old age, death and the relationship between the generations. For example, in A Bird in the House, identity in terms of escape is suggested by Grandmother Connor's caged canary in "The Sound of the Singing" and the trapped sparrow in "A Bird in the House". They point to the stagnation and repression as well as the living deaths of such characters as Piquette

Tonnerre in "The Loons" who attempts to escape the family shack by marrying an Englishman, or Harvy in "The Half-Husky" who passively accepts punishment at home but tortures Vanessa's dog.

If Vanessa moves between her maternal and paternal grandparents' houses, Morag in The Diviners moves from her dead parents' farm to Christie Logan's house in Hill Street, Manawanka, through a boarding house in Winnipeg, apartments in Toronto and Vancouver, a flat in London, a visit to a house in Northern Scotland, back to a farm near a town very like Manawanka. Morag has come full circle. As her daughter, Piquette, sets out on her own circle, Morag feels, like Brian in Who has Seen the Wind, that although she knows more, she understands less. Like the diviner and the scavenger, she tried to find something; what she found was the river that flows both ways, "Look ahead into the past, and back into the future, until the silence."[12] Unlike Morag, Christine in La route d'Altamont grows into understanding as she becomes part of what has been called "the weight of generations".[13] As the prairie contains the hills of Altamont, each person fulfills the people who went before them, as they in turn will be fulfilled by those who come after them. Human relationships are seen in terms of a great lake where "beginnings are always circling to endings"[14] rather than the river in The Diviners which flows in a straight line, back and forth between past and future.

As I have already indicated in the introduction, the critical method which I have followed in this thesis suggests that there is some value in taking Canadian criticism out of the realm of themes. Not only does it make a case for authors such as Grove, who have been condemned

because of an ill-defined and arbitrary critical standard, but also, in the field of comparative studies, it lays the groundwork for making comparisons between English and French texts based on technique--*récit* and *narration*--as well as on the choice of subject or *histoire*. It also points to the limitations of such a comparative thematic approach as that developed by Ronald Sutherland in *Second Image*. By concentrating on the *histoires* of a selection of English and French Canadian novels, he concludes that "the principal novels in French and English Canada have embraced the same spectrum of attitudes and ideas".[15] The control group of Western Canadian novels which I have examined in this thesis do indeed have a number of *histoires* in common, such as identity quests and the dialectic between material and spiritual values. Moreover, they are also similar in that, except for the works by Ross, they emphasize the paradigmatic level over the syntagmatic level. Nevertheless, the lake as-circle in *La route d'Altamont* and the river as straight line in *The Diviners* point to a significant difference in sensibility which exists between the French books and the English books. Although both sets of novels deal with essentially the same *histoires*, the English works develop such paradigms as fear, loneliness, alienation, repression and divisions,[16] whilst, except for the Bourgouins in *La Forêt*, the French books emphasize belonging, harmony, compromise, absorption, fulfillment.[17]

FOOTNOTES

FOOTNOTES: INTRODUCTION AND CHAPTER I

1. E. D. Blodgett, "The Concept of the 'Prairie' in Western Canadian Fiction," (Proceedings of the VIIth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association, in press), p. 1.

2. Edward A. McCourt, The Canadian West in Fiction, 2nd ed., (Toronto, 1970), p. 62.

3. Northrop Frye, "Conclusion" in Literary History of Canada, ed. Carl F. Klinck (Toronto, 1965), p. 835.

4. This is one of the themes which D. G. Jones develops in Butterfly on Rock (Toronto, 1970). While I do not deny that it is a significant theme in Canadian literature, the point I am making is that conceptualized fiction does not necessarily point to a garrison mentality.

5. Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative (London and New York, 1966), p. 88.

6. Roman Jakobson in "Linguistics and Poetics," Style in Language, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), 350-377, has shown how the structure of any piece of verbal communication is a hierarchy of language functions.

7. See Douglas O. Spettigue, Frederick Philip Grove (Toronto, 1969); Ronald Sutherland (Toronto, 1969); the critics cited in Frederick Philip Grove, ed. Desmond Pacey (Toronto, 1970); the Introductions to the New Canadian Library editions of Grove's works. W. E. Collin in "La Tragique Ironie de Frederick Philip Grove," Gants du Ciel, 10 (1946), 15-40, attempts to make a case for the symbolic nature of Grove's characters.

8. Frederick P. Grove, "Realism in Literature" in It Needs To Be Said . . . (Toronto, 1929), p. 51.

9. Gérard Genette, Figures III (Paris, 1972), p. 72.

10. Ibid., p. 74.

11. See Robert Scholes, Structuralism in Literature: An Introduction (New Haven and London, 1974), pp. 18-19 and p. 187; Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics" and "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbance" Selected Writings II (The Hague and Paris, 1971), 239-259.

12. Robert M. Jordan, Chaucer And The Shape of Creation: The Aesthetic Possibilities of Inorganic Structure (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), preface xi.

13. Frederick P. Grove, The Master of the Mill (1944; Rpt. Toronto, 1961), p. 22.

14. Sigfried Giedion, Space, Time and Architecture (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), p. 160.

15. Jakobson, "Two Aspects," p. 258.

16. Eugene Vinaver, The Rise of Romance (London, 1971), p. 76.

17. Cf. Scholes, Structuralism in Literature, pp. 185-186.

18. Cf. Scholes' discussion of the use of paradigm in Ulysses, pp. 187-190.

19. In "Introduction à l'analyse structurale des récits," Communications 8 (1966), 1-27, Roland Barthes discusses the two classes of unities which exist in narrative structures. He uses the term "fonctions" for the type of relationships within a predominantly metonymical structure and "indices" for those within a predominantly metaphorical structure.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER II

1. Marguerite Primeau, Dans le Muskeg (Montréal, 1960), p. 12.

2. In Gabrielle Roy's La Petite Poule D'Eau (Montréal, 1970), St. Joseph is the patron saint of le père Joseph-Marie whose ministry includes people of almost every race. The way in which the capucin obtains a donation towards buying a statue of St. Joseph from a Jewish travelling companion is reminiscent of le Père LeTournec's ability to both manipulate and compromise at the same time.

3. In his Introduction to the New Canadian Library edition, Carlyle King objects that "the author does not maintain a consistent point of view in her narration" (p. viii). My point is that a structure which has multiple narration will present several view points as a necessary part of its structure.

4. Martha Ostenso, Wild Geese (1925; Rpt. Toronto, 1961), p. 32.

5. Both Clara Thomas in "Martha Ostenso's Trial of Strength" in Writers of the Prairies, ed. Donald G. Stephens (British Columbia, 1973), 39-50 and Laurence Ricou in Vertical Man/Horizontal World (British Columbia, 1973) 74-80, concentrate on Caleb's obsessive attitude to the land as the significant aspect of the book. My point is that Caleb is part of a wider design. This view is shared by S. G. Mullins in "Some Remarks on Theme in Martha Ostenso's Wild Geese," Culture, 23 (1962), 359-362.

6. Ricou's thesis that it is the flatness of the land which challenges man to assert himself is undermined by Georges Bugnet's La Forêt (Montréal, 1935) in which the verticality of the landscape--the forest--provokes the same reaction. This would suggest that the common denominator is the state of mind rather than the topography of the land.

7. Roy, La Petite Poule D'Eau, p. 269.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER III

1. Arthur W. Hoffman in "Chaucer's Prologue to Pilgrimage: The Two Voices" in ELH, A Journal of English Literary History, XXI (1954), 1-16, explores some of the implications of the comparison which has been drawn between the portraits in the General Prologue of The Canterbury Tales and the figures in a tapestry. He suggests that what holds the portraits together is, not only the exterior framework of pilgrimage, but also the internal relationships among the portraits. These relationships are contained within a double definition of pilgrimage--its material and spiritual significance. One relationship which he works out among the pilgrims is their motivation for going on the pilgrimage. This ranges from the sacred to the secular and on to the profane. Within this range of motivation he gives examples of local sequences, fraternizing and contrasting pairs among the portraits. What I am suggesting is that a similar type of unity exists in Rue Deschambault. Just like the portraits, each story is complete in itself but is related to the other stories through the framework of Christine's consciousness.

2. The Prioress's golden brooch in her portrait has a similar function. According to Hoffman, human and divine love is one of the main threads which weaves the portraits together. He suggests that the ambiguity which underlies the Prioress's motivation for going on the pilgrimage and the whole implied range of motivation among all the pilgrims is summed up by the motto on her brooch--"Amor vincit omnia." He concludes that "the implications set up in the portrait as a whole seem to be clustered and tightly fastened in this ornament and symbol" (p. 9).

3. Gabrielle Roy, Rue Deschambault (Montréal, 1955), p. 38.

4. On one occasion, Christine, the narrator in Roy's La route d'Altamont (Montréal, 1966) walks around on stilts. She wonders, "Etait-ce pour voir loin dans la plaine unie? . . . Ou plus loin encore, dans une sorte d'avenir? . . . (p. 62).

5. In the first chapter of La Poétique de l'espace (Paris, 1958), Gaston Bachelard discusses the psychology of the house. Attic and basement represent two totally different aspects of the mind, "on peut opposer la rationalité du toit à l'irrationalité de la cave" (p. 35).

6. If the attic contains Christine's future self, she seeks out the privacy of her bedroom in "Les bijoux" in order to try out different identities.

7. Cf. the second part of Marc Gagné's Visages de Gabrielle Roy: L'Oeuvre et L'Ecrivain (Montréal, 1973) in which he discusses the importance of space (house, prairie, sky, town) and movement in Roy's novels.

8. Cf. "The Garden and The Cage: The Achievement of Gabrielle Roy," Canadian Literature, 1 (1959), 46-57 in which Hugo McPherson works out the dialectic in several of Roy's novels between the garden (childhood, innocence, the past) and the cage (adulthood, the city, experience, the present).

9. Edward T. Hall, The Hidden Dimension (1966; Rpt. New York, 1969), p. 1.

10. Sinclair Ross, As For Me and My House (1941; Rpt. Toronto, 1957), p. 88.

11. Three critics who are convinced by Mrs. Bentley's rhetoric are Donald Stephens in "Wind, Sun and Dust," Canadian Literature, 23 (1965), 17-24, Roy Daniells in his Introduction to the New Canadian Library edition and Sandra Djwa in "No Other Way: Sinclair Ross's Stories and Novels" Canadian Literature, 47 (1971), 49-65. As Wayne C. Booth points out in The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago, 1961) one of the problems of "authorial silence" (p. 271) is that the reader tends to sympathize with whoever tells the story whether or not he is a reliable narrator.

12. Whilst I agree with Warren Tallman in "Wolf in the Snow: Part One, Four Windows on Two Landscapes" Canadian Literature, 5 (1970), 7-20, that Philip is a "frustrated artist" whose "need to escape from isolation drives him to art" (p. 15), I feel that he fails to bring out Mrs. Bentley's part in this repression. His reading of the novel makes it totally Philip's story with Mrs. Bentley a mere recorder of facts.

13. Cf. Ricou, pp. 86-90.

14. William H. New, Sinclair Ross's Ambivalent World," Canadian Literature, 40 (1969), p. 28.

15. In "Snow", Over Prairie Trails (1922; Rpt. Toronto, 1957), the narrator enjoys "the battle of wits" (p. 78) as he tackles the fortresses, cliffs and hollows made by the snow drifts. His sensation of being outside of himself as he drives over "the tops of the trees . . . above that forest world which had so often engulfed me" (p. 86) recalls Gerard Manley Hopkins' sonnet "No Worst, There is None," Selected Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, ed. James Reeves (London, 1953):

> O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
> Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed.

16. Sinclair Ross, "The Lamp at Noon," The Lamp at Noon and Other Stories (Toronto, 1968), p. 13.

17. Sinclair Ross, "Not by Rain Alone," The Lamp at Noon and Other Stories (Toronto, 1968), p. 61.

18. Sinclair Ross, "The Painted Door," The Lamp at Noon and Other Stories (Toronto, 1968), p. 102.

FOOTNOTES: CONCLUSION

1. In "Grove and the Promised Land," Canadian Literature, 49 (1971), 10-19, S. E. McMullin works out the motif of the Promised Land in Grove's novels. He suggests that they develop the conflict between "two visions of the Promised Land" (p. 13)--the dream of the New World which was essentially agrarian, "where the individual soul can grow according to its own innate rules" (p. 13) and the Industrial Revolution through which "the ultimate fruits of the new vision were to be achieved" (p. 12).

2. Frederick P. Grove, Fruits of the Earth (1933; Rpt. Toronto, 1965), pp. 18-19.

3. Robert J. C. Stead, Grain (1926; Rpt. Toronto, 1963), p. 40.

4. Cf. Ricou, pp. 35-37.

5. Edward McCourt, Music at the Close (1947; Rpt. Toronto, 1966), p. 218.

6. Blodgett, "The Concept of the 'Prairie'," p. 9.

7. Georges Bugnet, Nypsia (Montréal, 1924), p. 67.

8. Georges Bugnet, La Forêt (Montréal, 1935), p. 75.

9. I disagree with Ricou's argument that Brian grows in understanding as he grows older and with that of W. H. New in "A Feeling of Completion: Aspects of W. O. Mitchell," Canadian Literature, 17 (1963), 22-33, in which he contends that Brian moves "from childhood completion through emptiness to a new completion" (p. 28). Whilst I agree with Tallman in "Wolf in the Snow" that Brian grows into a sense of isolation and alienation, I take issue with him insofar as he equates the young Ben with Brian. Rather than being isolated, the Young Ben, like Bugnet's Nypsia, totally belongs in the prairie. My argument is that Brian's feeling of alienation develops out of his position between town and prairie.

10. Although she suggests that the house can become a symbol, Susan Jackel in "The House on the Prairies," Canadian Literature, 42 (1969), 46-55, concentrates on the relationship between the house and the external facts about the people who live in them. The house, as static object, is seen as a centre for material, social and cultural development. In "Prisms and Arcs: Structures in Hébert and Munro" [Essays in Honour of Sheila Watson, forthcoming], E. D. Blodgett takes a structuralist approach to the house. He discusses the relationship between house and character in terms of metonymy and metaphor.

11. I consider Eli Mandel's view of the relationship between landscape and the mind too extreme; "Images of Prairie Man" in A Region of the Mind, ed. R. Allen, Canadian Plains Studies I (1973), 201-209. Rather than landscape being an invention of the mind, I see the relationship as a type of two-way exchange in which the mind absorbs what it wants from the landscape.

12. Margaret Laurence, The Diviners (1974; Rpt. Toronto, 1975), p. 453.

13. Blodgett, "Concept of the 'Prairie'," p. 3.

14. Ibid., p. 8.

15. Ronald Sutherland, Second Image (Toronto, 1971), p. 26.

16. Cf. Tallman, "Wolf in the Snow."

17. Cf. Blodgett, "Concept of the 'Prairie'."

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